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New York

President: Mr. Gurirab ..... (Namibia)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Participation of non-governmental organizations in the debate in the plenary of the twenty-fourth special session

The President: Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I should like to bring to the attention of members the matter of the participation of non-governmental organizations in the debate in the plenary of the twenty-fourth special session.

In this connection, members will recall that in its decision 54/407 of 8 October 1999, the General Assembly decided that, given availability of time, a limited number of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council could make statements in the plenary debate. The Assembly also requested the President of the Assembly to submit a list of selected non-governmental organizations to Member States for approval and to ensure that such a selection was made on an equal and transparent basis, taking into account the geographical representation and diversity of non-governmental organizations.

I should like to inform members that, after the necessary consultations, I have a list of nine selected non-governmental organizations and they are as follows: Third World Network; International Chamber of Commerce/International Organization of Employers; Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture; International Confederation of Free Trade Unions; Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre; International Cooperative Alliance; Social Watch; International Council on Social Welfare; and European Women's Lobby.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees that the representatives from the nine selected non-governmental organizations may make statements in the debate in the plenary of the special session?

It is so decided.

Those nine organizations will therefore be added to the end of the list of speakers and their statements will be limited to five minutes.

Agenda item 8 (*continued*)

Proposals for further initiatives for social development

(a) Review and appraisal of progress since the World Summit for Social Development

(b) Proposals for further initiatives for the full implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Caetano N'Chama, Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau.

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00-60262 (E)

Mr. N'Chama (Guinea-Bissau) (*spoke in Portuguese; interpretation provided by the delegation*): First and foremost, Mr. President, the Government of Guinea-Bissau would like from this rostrum to congratulate you on your election. We would like also to extend our deepest appreciation for the warm welcome accorded us by the Government and the people of Switzerland.

It is for us a great honour to address the Assembly on the occasion of this special session on social development, an issue that warrants our full attention.

As the world moves towards globalization, social problems continue to affect and ever more to concern the developing countries, where poverty is the greatest challenge and its eradication the greatest task — a task which has assumed a global dimension.

Though five years have passed since Copenhagen, poverty continues to be a scourge for humankind. A vast number of people live below the poverty line and have almost no access to basic social necessities. We believe that at this forum we will once again be able to reflect on and address this problem.

Our country, Guinea-Bissau, recently witnessed a political and military conflict that lasted 11 months — from June 1998 to May 1999. The conflict laid waste to our country and had devastating consequences for the people as well as for the economic and social development process under way. As a result, quite apart from the major property damage and loss of human life, the gross domestic product — whose average rate of real growth over the last four years was 4.6 per cent — fell by 28 per cent in 1998, considerably aggravating our situation of poverty.

Reconstruction in Guinea-Bissau will be a difficult task requiring not only domestic efforts but also the assistance of the international community.

Now that the conflict is over, the process of national development has resumed, led by a Government of National Unity Government, which was in power until February of this year and had as a minimum agenda the maintenance of peace; national reconciliation; the rehabilitation of physical infrastructures, such as hospitals, schools and private houses, which were destroyed during the conflict; and the organization of presidential and legislative elections.

That programme was fully implemented, and an emergency round table was held in May 1999 at which the international community promised some considerable assistance to our country, amounting to $215 million. Unfortunately, those promises were not fulfilled, and so far nothing has been released to our country. We deem this most regrettable, because we have complied with the conditions imposed by the international community.

In November 1999, presidential and legislative elections were held in Guinea-Bissau that were considered by the international community to be free, fair and transparent. This democratic process elected the President of the Republic, who received 72 per cent of the vote, as well as the Parliament and the new Government, which are now functioning smoothly, and the country has recovered its stability.

We would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for the financial and other assistance that we have received from international organizations and friendly countries, which helped to make the general elections in Guinea-Bissau a reality.

A broad-based coalition Government has been established consisting of the Social Renewal Party (PRS), the winning party, and the Guinea-Bissau Resistance (RGB), which came in second, as well as other parties and independent candidates. This gives it stability at the parliamentary and governmental levels, as Government parties hold 70 of the 102 parliamentary seats.

The new Government now has the responsibility of continuing the economic and social development process and restoring the country's credibility. Against this backdrop, and in the context of its governance programme, our Administration is devoting priority attention to the social sectors, emphasizing the implementation of a vigorous strategy for combating poverty while promoting employment. We also have a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme for ex-combatants, for which the Council of the World Bank has already approved the necessary funding.

Indeed, a tripartite partnership is required between the Government, the private sector and civil society. The two latter elements are considered to be pillars complementing the Government's efforts towards national development.

In that context, the Government's policy will be based on the democratic exercise of power, the fight against corruption, the promotion and defence of human rights, the equitable distribution of wealth, good governance and public debt relief.

World statistics show that most poverty is situated in Africa and Asia, where more than 1 billion human beings are living in the most extreme poverty. The prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in a peaceful manner, as well as peacekeeping and ensuring stability, may make positive contributions to poverty reduction in Africa. The democratic exercise of power and combating corruption, the promotion and defence of human rights, equitable distribution of wealth, good governance and relief of public debt are all factors that can make major contributions to the reduction of poverty.

The battle against poverty has become an integral component of the concept of social development. The international community has made this and the improvement of living conditions one its principal objectives since the Copenhagen Summit.

The most effective solution for reducing poverty in our modern world in the light of the experience we have accumulated seems to be linked to participation by the poor themselves in the design, implementation and evaluation of programmes to combat poverty. Poverty is a reality in Guinea-Bissau because more than 49 per cent of its population of 1,200,000 is poor. Of that 49 per cent, 26 per cent is classified as extremely poor, living on less than $1 a day, which, of course, prevents them from having access to education, health, basic services, hygiene, energy and appropriate nutrition. It is thus no surprise that infant mortality should be so high. It is estimated that of every 1,000 live births, 140 children die and that of every 100,000 women giving birth, 900 die.

Given this situation, the Government of Guinea-Bissau has attached particular priority to combating poverty. The Government therefore includes within its structure institutions specifically designed to combat poverty. This includes in particular the Ministry and the Secretariat of State for Social Solidarity and Combating Poverty, the Institute for Women and Children, the National Institute for Social Security and the Foundation for Social Action.

In the context of its programme, the Government has adopted a strategy for reducing poverty in our country, and the major axes of that strategy are the following: First, economic growth based on a stable macroeconomic policy with a view to the creation of jobs and professional training; secondly, investment in human resources through improved access to education, health services and drinking water; and thirdly, promoting the construction of social housing and the provision of loans.

We would like to announce that within the next few days, the Government will begin consultations in this context with international bodies such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund and with bilateral partners, with a view to developing a strategy for the country. We then must ensure that the country have a consensus strategy in keeping with the aspirations of the Guinea-Bissau people.

Combating poverty is a social problem for modern society which must be resolved to ensure that human development will be sustainable.

The Governments of countries which have decided to combat poverty as a priority within the context of their development policy should have the same vision of this scourge and should deal with it as a real challenge to be overcome to ensure genuine social progress and development. Poverty reduction, which indeed is our country's main problem, will become a reality if the industrialized countries and international organizations deal with this phenomenon as a world problem and provide the necessary financial resources.

We aspire to an international community which actually involves itself and truly participates in the process of combating and reducing poverty. This idea, if unanimously accepted and implemented through measures to combat poverty, must be based on the establishment of mechanisms that ensure transparency and the objective management of resources so that we can attain these objectives. Our country is prepared to show that it is totally transparent and will allow the audit of all funds to help it. These are some thoughts I wished to communicate to the Assembly.

The President: I thank the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau. I call on Mr. Chris Okemo, Minister for Finance of Kenya.

Mr. Okemo: First I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election. Secondly, we would like, as the delegation of Kenya, on my own behalf and on behalf of the entire delegation, to thank

the Government and the people of Switzerland for the warm welcome they have accorded us since our arrival to this beautiful country.

When we gathered in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1995, we committed ourselves before the world to pursue with determination the goals of social development we had identified. At that time, we in Kenya believed the conference would be the springboard from which we would together create a more humane and understanding world. In 1995 many hoped that economic development would gradually but surely improve all our lives and that we had come together to chart a way forward that would benefit the bulk of humanity. Well, dear friends, we all know that the contrary is true. Social development in those parts of the world that the conference was meant to benefit has in the best case scenario stagnated and in the worst case scenario deteriorated to an all time low.

I recall that after our meeting, we resolved to implement ten commitments. While all these commitments were capable of standing alone, from my point of view, their overriding objective was the eradication of poverty.

We all expected that our resources and energy after that seminal event would be directed at meeting the challenge of that objective enshrined in Commitment 2, which is the goal of

> "eradicating poverty in the world, through decisive national actions and international cooperation, as an ethical, social, political and economic imperative of humankind."

In my own country, Kenya, the problems of poverty have been thrust to centre stage. Secretary-General Kofi Annan's insistence on a people-centred approach to development resonates with our own. Thirty-seven years after independence, we are threatened by perilously low standards of living among our peoples. Economic growth has slowed, mainly due to globalization, on the one hand, and natural disasters on the other, as well as to the goal-shifting mindset of some of our bilateral and multilateral partners. Traditional social-safety-net systems, which have been tried and tested over centuries in Africa, have now been undermined and have collapsed as a result.

In order to cope with the impending loss of these safety nets, at independence in 1963 Kenya initiated a self-help policy we called "Harambee", in which projects initiated by community-based needs were implemented by voluntary contributions, either in cash or in kind. For example, schools, hospitals, roads, cattle dips and coffee factories were constructed through this approach.

These voluntary contributions were intended to complement and not replace the Government-driven development process. They were, in any event, not sufficient to meet the development needs of our society. In fact, shortly thereafter, new approaches to complement both existing Government efforts and "Harambee" had to be found. We still believe that it will be through decisive international action and cooperation that poverty will eventually be tackled.

The approach that we have pursued so far to fight poverty has not had the desired effects, and I am convinced that the time has come to give our people the means, the tools and the capacity to produce for themselves. In fact some of the policies embarked upon over the years have had the net effect of adversely impacting our economic capacity.

Since independence, Kenya has consistently tried to create an economic, political, social, cultural and legal environment that will enable people to achieve social development. Consequently, the Kenya Government has put in place structures to ensure that the private sector is able to work free of interference. Those sectors that were the domain of the Government have been privatized. These include such basic-infrastructure sectors as posts and telecommunications.

Whereas we have established appropriate conditions to facilitate free trade, the negative impact of privatization and liberalization has diminished their import. Indeed, the very core of this first commitment has forced us to design programmes to ameliorate the negative effects. We must continue to insist that agreed-upon structural adjustment programmes must have a human face and dimension. We believe that development should include the entire society.

Education is the only way out of the grip of poverty. Statistics show that in all countries where the people have broad access to education and this access is vigorously utilized, impressive growth has resulted in lifting all, in a tide of affluence that benefits the whole society. Because of our ever-changing needs, now dominated by the logic of globalization, Kenya continues to adapt its educational system to these changes. In this regard, it is worth stressing that we

have put in place policies that favour education in the sciences, and we hope that the positive effects of this policy will be seen in the near future. We see this commitment as incorporating equality and gender-relevant access to quality education, buttressed by the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Indeed, as we strive to improve our education systems, we also struggle to improve the infrastructure and performance of our health systems, in particular, at the primary healthcare level by broadening access to health care.

We have discussed at length where appropriate global emphasis should be placed, and how to proceed. I hope that the words do not drown the ideas and that the required practical measures will be taken. For my part, I know that the key to true social development lies in eradicating poverty. We must therefore continue to stress this fact.

The Bretton Woods institutions must adapt and be responsive to changing circumstances, without shifting goal posts. Bilateral and multilateral debt must be written off for those countries that meet the criteria. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative has so far benefited too few countries. The threshold must be lowered to include countries like Kenya that have done a great deal, but have yet to be rewarded.

Regional integration and the exploitation of economies of scale have motivated us in the East African Community to look beyond purely national horizons, and we urgently need international support to complement our regional efforts. We believe that economic integration will assist in the achievement of true independence and development for our people. The growth of our economies will enable us to address the problem of unemployment, a scourge that has to be looked at seriously; otherwise we will have neither social development nor political stability. Commitment 8 and its goals push us along the right path. In addition, for our discussions to be relevant today, access to technology and the Internet must be democratized.

Allow me to say a few words on the problem of corruption. This disease continues to eat at the fabric of our societies. Kenya has taken robust action to deal with this evil, and many have been called to account, from the highest in our society to the lowest. We will continue to actively wage this war, and I know that in time we will succeed. However, this war cannot be waged by an individual or by a country on its own, since the links and networks of corruption are deep and global. The solutions must therefore be holistic and global in nature. To ensure effectiveness national private sectors, together with multinationals, must agree with Governments on a common code of conduct and appropriate punitive measures. Although attitudes must change, greed and poverty are the culprits we must relentlessly fight in order to eliminate corruption.

In conclusion, our collective political will — backed by financial resources to ensure people-centred economic and social development, and sharpened by our resolve to make this millennium a peaceful one — must be mobilized to cope with the challenges. It is only then that our goal of social development will be achieved. We hope that proactive energetic multilateralism, coupled with our common desire to globalize, will one day enable the African lion to sit with the Asian tiger at the table with the eagles, the rising sun and others, as equals, desirous of making our world a better place to live.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Noureddine Boukrouh, Minister of Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses of the Republic of Algeria.

Mr. Boukrouh (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): Allow me first of all, on behalf of the Algerian delegation, to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Swiss authorities for the efforts they have made to ensure the success of this special session. Nor can I fail to take this opportunity to express our fullest satisfaction with the work of Mr. Theo-Ben Gurirab, the President of the fifty-fourth General Assembly, who is guiding our work so professionally, and to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their well-deserved election.

I should also like, on behalf of Algeria, to pay special tribute to Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations, and, through him, to the entire family of the United Nations system, which, though the convening of this session, is reaffirming the pioneering role of our Organization and its commitment to a new development paradigm.

Five years have elapsed since the World Summit on Social Development of 1995, which, for the first time in the history of humankind, raised social development to the level of universal concern. This "development with a human face" is based on values whose universality is reaffirmed daily. Respect for

human dignity, good governance, equity and participation all are elements of a new reality which is inexorably gaining ground throughout the world.

Though we can only be gratified at this remarkable progress, particularly as concerns the growing awareness of the urgency of the major social problems of our times, it is true nonetheless that the outcome of the mid-term reviews of the various world conferences and summits has been less than satisfactory.

In the context of global progress, the universal acknowledgement of the social dimension of economic development is our major achievement. It is this acknowledgement that has made possible the intensification of efforts to assist the social sectors and the poorest populations. Although there has been an improvement in certain social indicators worldwide — for instance, in the areas of life expectancy, literacy, infant mortality and access to basic social services — the progress made is still insufficient and falls short of the objectives of the Copenhagen Summit.

An even less favourable evolution can be noted in other aspects of social development, reflected in increased unemployment, the spread of poverty and inequality, the persistence of local or regional conflicts, and so on.

In addition, the modest gains made are distributed very unevenly between countries and regions. This differentiation reflects increasingly uneven levels of cultural and technical development and standards of living between the developed countries of the North and the developing countries of the South.

Globalization and the liberalization of trade and capital flows, initiated and organized by developed countries primarily in the light of their own interests, have further stymied the economies of the South. There has been a continued deterioration in the terms of trade; vulnerability to sudden financial upheavals born of financial speculation has increased; the technological gap has widened; debt-processing mechanisms and the financial relations set-up have, paradoxically, caused net transfers from poor countries to rich countries; and restrictions have been imposed on access to the markets of developed countries by goods from countries of the South that have a comparative advantage.

These negative aspects, which affect not only developing countries but also the world economy, have been aggravated by a continuing decline in official development assistance, even though the need for it has increased, and by a change in its allocation to the detriment of the least developed countries.

The burden of debt and debt servicing has increased, further reducing the resources available for social development. It is true that there have been recent developments in this area and that initiatives have been taken to alleviate this problem. Nonetheless, while we would stress the positive attitude of the creditor countries, we believe that the conditions placed on the implementation of these initiatives often minimize their impact.

This evolution of the global economic context has particularly affected Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Poverty has become more widespread than in other regions, and the gap between the poor and the poorest has widened. Local and regional conflicts continue to preclude any improvement in the social situation of certain countries. Africa continues to be excluded from the circuit of international trade and financial markets, confirming a 20-year marginalization. Africa is staggering under the burden of overwhelming foreign debt which precludes any possibility of development.

The decade that has just elapsed was the most difficult period in the brief history of my country. In addition to the serious social consequences of the in-depth reforms carried out to transform the centralized economic system into a market economy, we have had to bear the terrible burden of indiscriminate and destructive terrorism. The exceptional complexity of our economic and social situation required major efforts to halt the deterioration in the standard of living of the population, which is increasingly affected by unemployment, poverty and social exclusion.

We had to undertake a vast national effort, reflected in the referendum on civil harmony which took place in September 1999, in order to restore civil peace and security, which are prerequisites for any lasting economic development or stable democracy.

Concurrently, and together with the economic reforms begun jointly with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, the State strengthened its actions in the social sector, leading to the re-establishment and consolidation of the social security

system, which covers more than 80 per cent of the population. The system was also expanded through the creation of an unemployment compensation system designed to address the consequences of the restructuring of the economic sector.

A national conference on social policy will be convened under the auspices of the President of the Algerian Republic in October 2000 that will define the outlines and objectives of a social development strategy that is in conformity with the recommendations contained in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

Before concluding, I should like to note that despite the mixed results revealed by this review of the Copenhagen Summit, we remain hopeful that we can make up for the delays.

The Millennium Assembly, to be held in New York in September, represents a unique opportunity to reaffirm the will of the international community to create a new world order in which coming generations can begin the new millennium free from the spectre of hunger, disease and all forms of conflict or violence. We are convinced that only a collective and agreed effort, in a spirit of solidarity, on the part of the international community can help bring about such a world order.

The President: We will now hear a statement by Her Excellency Ms. Uktomkhan Abdoulaeva, First Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Affairs of Kyrgyzstan.

Ms. Abdoulaeva (Kyrgyzstan) (*spoke in Russian*): It is a great honour to greet, on behalf of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, the organizers and the participants of such an important and representative special session of the General Assembly. We fully agree with the Secretary-General's view that although responsibility for social development must be borne by countries individually, it cannot successfully be implemented without the joint commitment and efforts of the international community. In that context, we need to devote our greatest efforts to fully implementing the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

It is clear that there is no single universal way of achieving social development. The transition period being experienced by Kyrgyzstan, like many other countries carrying out economic reforms, is accompanied by negative phenomena which have led to a deterioration of the living conditions of most of our population. As a result, we have seen negative economic growth in our country, steadily increasing social disintegration and the dissipation of social property. Thus, 55 per cent of the Kyrgyz population lives below the poverty threshold.

Bearing in mind the similarity of problems in terms of social affairs and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, we wish to support the suggestion made by the Deputy Prime Minister of the Government of the Russian Federation, Mrs. Matvienko, in her statement at this session, on holding a major high-level regional conference under United Nations auspices to discuss social development problems in countries with economies in transition.

It must be emphasized that for our countries, countries with economies in transition, the expenditure required to service external debt limits the possibilities to promote social development, and I fully agree with the statements of previous speakers who emphasized this problem as a subject for dialogue and further consideration of possible solutions at the highest level.

Five years ago at the World Summit on Social Development at Copenhagen, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, like all other participants, assumed the responsibility of establishing conditions to promote social progress and justice, and to improve its population's living conditions by involving everyone in the process. Real steps, over the last five years, include the adoption of a number of social programmes: Ayalzat, the national programme designed to achieve the equitable participation of women in the political, economic and social life of the country; Emgek, the national programme on the labour market and on the promotion of employment; Ardager, a national programme to support the elderly; Araket, a national programme to eliminate poverty by 2015; Kyrgyzstan's national strategy to ensure sustainable human development; and a national programme to support the disabled and to develop villages. All these strategies share a social concern to eliminate poverty.

We are also developing the comprehensive bases of our development policy up to 2010. Their particular value lies in an agreed approach by all participants in social processes to attain general objectives such as mitigating and reducing poverty and creating a

sustainable environment for harmonious and stable development.

The Republic of Kyrgyzstan attaches primary importance to the implementation of what we call the Silk Road diplomacy doctrine. This will make it possible for us all to use our capacities and great potential to strengthen international, commercial, economic, cultural, humanitarian, scientific and technical contacts between countries and peoples. This doctrine will provide the necessary preconditions for strengthening further international cooperation in overcoming current global problems.

Extending the traditions of the Silk Road and the emergence of Kyrgyzstan as a genuine centre of trade routes between Asia and Europe is the strategic direction for our integration into the global economic system. The major significance of the Great Silk Road in supporting diplomatic relationships between major countries in Europe and Asia leads us to acknowledge that we in Kyrgyzstan, together with other Central Asian countries, will approach problems and create the necessary preconditions for establishing relationships of friendship and cooperation among all countries in the Great Silk Road region, stretching from Portugal to Japan.

The conduct of such diplomacy is based on the following essential principles: first, equitable partnership, friendship and cooperation with all countries on the Great Silk Road. This component has an objective and universal nature, and is based on the aspirations of any country interested in establishing a favourable environment along its national borders in the context of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Secondly, interdependence has become a new phenomenon at the end of the twentieth century. Globalization means that we must recognize the indisputable fact that no country, however powerful militarily and economically, can alone deal with the challenges which endanger the survival of all mankind. Thirdly, the development of international cooperation in the context of the Great Silk Road region will make it possible for all countries to find a response to many issues and to solve the problems they currently face.

Fourthly, the multifaceted nature of international cooperation for development means we must create favourable conditions for building a balanced, flexible and manoeuvrable policy on the international level. This, in the long term, will meet the national interests of Kyrgyzstan and will set the stage for solving a whole set of problems in the future.

The current revival of the Great Silk Road makes it possible to create all the necessary conditions to convert the region into an area of stability, security, friendship, cooperation and equitable partnership. The current status of the Great Silk Road also creates the necessary conditions for intensifying international cooperation to overcome the global socio-economic problems facing us at the threshold of the third millennium.

It is quite clear that all the negative phenomena that mankind is struggling with today can be countered only if all members of the international community clearly manifest the political will and if there are joint efforts. I am convinced that every country, regardless of its size, can make its own contribution to the common cause. The concept of Silk Road diplomacy will be a specific contribution of Kyrgyzstan to this important process.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Walid Nasr, Chairman of the delegation of Lebanon.

Mr. Nasr (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): While social development is the objective, the means to achieve it are many and various. Sometimes national economic policies and the way they are adopted create an appropriate climate for achieving economic growth and thus social development. These policies have to take into consideration the human dimension, since this is not merely a mathematical problem.

During the last two decades there have been profound changes in terms of economic infrastructures and the market economy. National economies have also become increasingly interdependent. This is also true in the social sphere. The consequences of these economic changes and their social repercussions have affected the entire world. In recent years in particular, economic restructuring has become one of the priorities of developing countries. This is sometimes carried out as a result of a conviction that it might be the ideal means to achieve social development, and sometimes under external constraints.

If economic globalization is what characterizes our world today, this globalization needs another face in order for the picture to be complete. We need to develop a global social policy that is based on new

institutions, policies and entities that can put this new global social policy into effect. Social development must be built on a reciprocal sense of inter-State responsibility. Through joint efforts, national economic restructuring must be carried out in tandem with other reforms so that we can achieve the desired objective — the eradication of poverty — and so that the poorest populations can benefit from social development.

Among the priorities of the Lebanese Government — in particular as regards balanced social development — are the following. I will be very brief, as I do not have the time to list all our priorities. Lebanon is developing an economic and social policy in which partnership between the State and civil society plays a very important role. There is also a partnership between the private and public sectors.

For many years Lebanon suffered immensely as a result of the Israeli occupation, particularly in the south and the western Bekaa. Thanks to the courageous struggle and resistance of its people and the support of its friends, Lebanon was able to dislodge these occupying forces. However, there have been very negative economic and social consequences. They have sapped our economy. Repeated Israeli aggression undermined our infrastructure, including electric power stations, roads and other basic services. The consequences of this aggression have been very harmful to the social development process in Lebanon.

As I said, our Government is seriously endeavouring to achieve the goal of social development. Operating on the premise that sustainable economic growth is linked to social development, we are proceeding with financial reforms, privatization, and other projects in order to strengthen human resources, create new jobs, strengthen competition and distribute income and wealth fairly among all social strata.

Lebanon is today experiencing economic and social challenges that differ from those it faced in the past — from the first Israeli invasion in 1978 and since the painful events that stretched from 1975 to 1990. These challenges are the result of emigration, the brain drain, the departure of young people who have advanced degrees and do not find jobs in the local job market. There are also essential changes that have taken place on a global scale. All of these developments have had negative consequences for the Lebanese economy and its institutions, whether nationally, regionally or globally.

As for the policies developed by Lebanon to achieve the objective of economic growth and social development, I can sum them up as follows. First, financial reform: we need to begin by rebalancing the State's budget. This amounts to reviewing public-expenditure policies. Secondly, privatization: this is the second pillar of Lebanon's policy, namely, to involve the private sector, which of course means rechannelling Government expenditures to the social sector. Thirdly, liberalization of trade: we are undertaking characteristic economic growth, by which we will extend the markets for Lebanese goods. Lebanon is implementing the provisions of the executive programme of the Arab Common Market. We are also involved in talks with the European Union. Fourthly, we have a plan of action and development, whose objectives include promoting rural development, creating small- and medium-sized enterprises, developing housing credits, and developing and modernizing social security.

The major challenges to developing countries — rather, the questions that must be asked — are, how can we derive benefits from globalization and how can we reduce its negative effects on developing countries? I think that in the future the forces of globalization will have effects on multilateral trade. Some of these forces must be properly harnessed so that we can achieve the goals of economic development. If we want to overcome social development problems, this has to be done through international solidarity.

The President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Patricia Bird, Commissioner of Social Improvement of Antigua and Barbuda.

Mrs. Bird (Antigua and Barbuda): It is with a deep sense of honour and privilege that I address this body on the occasion of the twenty-fourth special session of the United Nations General Assembly, entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: achieving social development for all in a globalizing world".

On behalf of the Government of Antigua and Barbuda, I would like to take this opportunity to extend to you, Sir, and to the other members of the bureau congratulations and warmest greetings.

Five years ago, we gathered in Copenhagen to participate in the World Summit for Social Development. Now we are gathered here today to review the commitments undertaken, identify obstacles and decide on the way forward.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda reaffirms the commitments made at Copenhagen and has identified poverty eradication, employment creation, health and social integration as core issues for immediate action. In this way we can ensure the building of human capabilities and increase the dignity of personhood. To strengthen and support local mechanisms within the ministry, a Social Sector Planner and a Commissioner of Social Improvement have been appointed.

Many forums throughout the 1990s saw poverty reduction high on the agenda of the international community. We are fortunate that not one of us exists in the abject poverty which is a way of life for some unfortunate inhabitants of the world's poorest nations, but we are all committed to the objectives agreed to at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development.

Yet it is true that areas of vulnerability do exist. The elderly, young single parents and the disabled — those challenged either mentally or physically — are the most marginalized persons in society. We also forget those unfortunate persons who were affected by the destruction caused by hurricanes between September 1995 and 1998. Two occurred within the same year.

Through our economic initiatives we are creating more jobs every day to absorb more of the unemployed. Our rate of unemployment — approximately 5 per cent — is still one of the lowest in the Caribbean, despite our having absorbed and provided humanitarian assistance to more than 3,000 of our brothers and sisters from Montserrat after the devastation caused by the volcanic eruption there, as we are very mindful of their basic human rights.

For our elderly, the Government of Antigua and Barbuda has instituted measures aimed at providing relief to citizens through price control of a number of basic food items, and it provides assistance costing several million dollars per year. For persons over 80 years, we have devised a method of exemption of payment of public utilities. A home care programme for the elderly and incapacitated has been introduced in order to enable these persons to remain in their own homes instead of being placed in an institution. In so doing, we have also created jobs for those home helpers who provide care. Those elderly persons who do not qualify for social security are given a Government pension through this programme.

To enable our people to have secure and sustainable livelihoods, we have continued our youth skills programmes, which are specifically geared towards young unemployed mothers, who are paid while in training. There are also apprenticeship programmes, and help with job search is available. There are 768 persons in training — 98 per cent female, aged 18 to 45.

We are also happy to report that assistance is available from local banks to help in setting up small enterprises. Many initiatives exist. There are tax exemptions, a 10-year waiver of corporate tax, and other special concessions for businesses. There is a strategic alliance involving the State, the private sector, trade unions, community-based organizations, members of civil society and non-governmental organizations to promote and assist in social development.

The youth of our country are the flowers of our nation. The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has done much to give our youth a head start in a highly competitive world. There are full and partial scholarships available abroad for studies in most disciplines. Land for youth is another initiative of my Government, which allows young people to purchase land at affordable prices to build their homes. Several housing schemes are also under way to construct homes for our people.

In the area of health, Antigua and Barbuda consistently spends more money on health care per capita than many other Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) countries. Arrangements have also been made for those who may need specialist care abroad. A medical benefits scheme provides free medicine for those with chronic illnesses. Reproductive health is high on the agenda as we try to curb the spread of HIV/AIDS. In collaboration with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), we have embarked upon specific programmes to reduce the risk of transmission of the HIV virus from mother to child.

Persons with the HIV virus who have progressed to AIDS are able to access primary health-care and support services. Medications for opportunistic

infections are free of charge. However, at present we are unable to purchase protease inhibitors because of the exorbitant cost.

Educational and outreach programmes are ongoing, and the number of men attending family planning programmes is an indication of responsible reproductive behaviour.

The Government of Antigua and Barbuda has embarked upon a multisectoral and intersectoral approach, and it is proactive in fighting vulnerability and providing better care for the mentally handicapped. In accordance with International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 159, a job programme has been created that offers an enabling environment to disabled persons for income-generating and equal training opportunities, thus relieving the incidence of poverty among this group of persons.

A register of children with special needs is to be compiled to ensure that impairments do not develop into disabilities or handicaps. Formulation of a national policy is under way. It would be remiss of me here not to mention orphans who also have AIDS and are homeless.

While our progress has been noteworthy, with no significant assistance from donor countries and agencies, we are continually faced with many competing demands on our limited capital. Prominent among these is the development of institutional capacity for the effective and full implementation of those areas of critical concern. In essence, the political will is there, and the commitment to social improvements is not in doubt. However, the lack of resources — financial and technical — has hindered some of our efforts. Substantial challenges also remain in the area of the protection of children and their development and well-being.

Since Copenhagen, the terrain of operations has changed. One word captures the essence of the radical changes: globalization. Indeed, we are now in a globalized world. On the heels of this revolution are rapid changes in information technology and computer advances. It is therefore recommended that the opportunities of globalization should be evenly distributed, particularly in countries of the developing world. It is the view of my delegation that globalization and its transformative agents should also be viewed in the context of how they can assist and improve the standard of living of the not-so-fortunate.

Concrete efforts are still needed to secure basic social services in order to reach the goals agreed to at Copenhagen. We look forward to assistance by the international community for vulnerable States such as ours in order to ensure that the people of Antigua and Barbuda continue to grow as a modern nation fully capable of participating competitively in the global arena.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Prasong Rananand, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare of Thailand.

Mr. Rananand (Thailand): It is indeed an honour and a pleasure for me to be present here today and to address this very important special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives.

On behalf of the Government of Thailand, I should like to thank Switzerland, the host of this session, for extending a most hospitable welcome to the Thai delegation.

History was made in 1995 when 117 heads of State and Government, including Mr. Chuan Leekpai, Prime Minister of Thailand, gathered in Copenhagen to discuss exclusively the issue of social development for the first time. Five years later the wave of globalization has brought about many obstacles that pose tremendous challenges to social development. If we wish to transform the earth into a better place to live for our future generations, strong political will and the vigorous implementation of agreed initiatives are necessary.

In this connection, the international community must generally address the declining trend of official development assistance and urge the implementation of the 20/20 initiative. Furthermore, the mechanisms of the Economic and Social Council should be strengthened so that it can effectively carry out its mandate. Thailand also commends the initiation of working arrangements among the United Nations, the International Labour Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions, which should facilitate more effective mobilization of resources and coordination of efforts at the policy level. This is essential if we are to achieve the global agenda on economic and social development.

Moreover, the international community needs to have appropriate safeguards to ensure that developing and transitional economies can integrate themselves into the global economy without putting macroeconomic stability at risk. Consequently, an international mechanism to monitor and regulate the flow of capital markets has to be created for the purpose of providing a more fertile breeding ground for social development.

The international trade system should also be restructured to bring about a more level playing field for the vast majority of developing countries that still have their destiny tied to export income from a few commodities, as well as for low and middle-income countries.

Although the financial crisis in Thailand that started in 1997 has brought economic hardship to the Thai people, it has also had the positive effect of catalysing political reform inherent in the 1997 Constitution of Thailand, the most democratic one in our history and probably one of the most precious gifts for the Thai people.

The Constitution provided for the establishment of many new organizations to safeguard the rights of Thai nationals, such as the National Human Rights Commission, the Parliamentary Ombudsman, the Constitutional Court and the Administrative Court. Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission will hopefully be established before the end of this year. Thailand is also in the process of drafting a national plan of action on human rights and human rights education.

This new Constitution has provided a firm foundation for Thailand to pursue a proactive human rights policy in the international arena. Thailand believes that democracy, good governance and sustainable development are interconnected and closely related to the issue of human rights. Human security should not only encompass the security aspects, but should also embrace the social and economic dimensions. Thailand has thus endeavoured at the international, national, local and grass-roots levels to uphold the aspirations and principles of the United Nations, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 as well as other human rights conventions to which Thailand is a party.

In May 2000, Thailand was elected a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Thailand pledges to fulfil to the best of its ability its task as a member of the Commission to contribute towards the building of a just and harmonious world social order for the observance of political and economic freedom.

Another important consequence of the financial crisis in Thailand was the recognition of the need to incorporate the promotion of social integration.

The Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan, which covers the period from 1997 to 2001, put emphasis on people-centred development. This Plan highlights the importance of providing social welfare to marginalized groups, including women and children, especially those that are vulnerable to the sex industry and prone to abuse and exploitation, persons with disabilities, the elderly, the urban and the rural poor, individuals in the correctional system, prisoners, minorities, indigenous peoples and people with HIV/AIDS. These groups, regarded as high priority targets for social integration for Thailand, should be able to lead their lives with dignity and become productive members of society.

This significant shift in the development paradigm from growth-centred development to people-centred development, evident in the Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan, will be pursued in the Ninth National Development Plan, which covers the period 2002 to 2006.

The Thai Government is convinced that sustainable and equitable development will lead to economic growth with social justice.

Let this Assembly bear testimony to a new global partnership among Governments and civil societies, working hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder to realize the aspirations of social legitimacy as contemplated in the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action.

The President: I now call on Her Excellency Mrs. Marie-Pierre Lloyd, Special Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Manpower Development of Seychelles.

Mrs. Lloyd (Seychelles): It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to represent my country and my people at this twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly on the "World Summit for Social Development and beyond".

First, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as President of the General Assembly and to extend our appreciation to the United Nations and to the Swiss Government for facilitating and hosting this important gathering.

The Seychelles Government has, since independence in 1976, been committed to the development of each and every Seychellois citizen regardless of gender, age, ethnicity or disability. Our achievements in education, health and employment, to name a few areas, bear witness to a political will that places people at the centre of development. It was no surprise, therefore, that Seychelles was among the first countries to ratify the Copenhagen Declaration.

Since then Seychelles has actively pursued follow-up to the Declaration. A Working Group for Social Development was formed in 1996 and was mandated to formulate a new social development strategy and translate the 10 commitments of the Copenhagen Declaration into a national plan of action.

Having reviewed the country's achievements to date, the Working Group recognized the need to sustain these achievements while addressing new and emerging issues and concerns, such as HIV/AIDS, global climatic changes and other aspects of globalization which are posing new challenges to the country and to our people.

The new Social Development Strategy for Seychelles Beyond 2000 is a strategy which supports growth, gives priority to the disadvantaged and vulnerable, encourages participation and fosters tolerance, respect for human dignity, human rights and the law. It is a shared commitment of the Government and all its partners to ensure that we respond more effectively to the needs of the Seychellois people.

The three fundamental objectives of the strategy are poverty alleviation, realization of distributive justice and the enhancement of popular participation.

As we know, poverty has many faces. In Seychelles, while we do not see much absolute poverty, we still find that women and children often bear a disproportionate burden of relative poverty. Single-parent families are the most vulnerable. Our strategy calls for improved targeting by according special consideration to social policy, planning and programming aimed at intensifying efforts to target pockets of poverty and thereby protecting those in need. The strategy also recognizes the need to provide social and economic protection during periods of unemployment, ill health, maternity, disability and old age.

The equitable distribution of both the burdens and benefits of development is also central to our strategy. Both horizontal and vertical equity remain at the heart of our efforts to support and promote distributive justice. Thus, we continue to promote gender mainstreaming as a way of ensuring equity and equality between men and women. Our strategy is to target both men and women, identifying and addressing their specific needs and areas where they are disadvantaged.

Children and youth have always been assigned high priority by the Government. The strategy now calls for an intensification of our efforts in child protection and in targeting the specific needs of young people. We have already embarked on a national and comprehensive programme of sensitization on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, highlighting both the rights and responsibilities of children, their parents, teachers and the public at large.

The active and full participation of the people themselves in the management and execution of their development is critical if they are to have their needs met fully and effectively. The Seychelles Government is therefore putting great emphasis on the role of the family in the provision of basic care and support for children, the elderly and the disabled through the provision of moral and spiritual guidance and emotional support through care and love.

The traditional family is, however, being confronted by the many challenges stemming from globalization and development processes worldwide. It is therefore essential that the family be strengthened so that it can carry out its role effectively. We have put in place a family institute aimed at enhancing the capacity of the family to support and care for its members. It is hoped that through collaboration with non-governmental organizations this objective will be achieved.

We also recognize that a constructive partnership among all sectors of society is required if the people themselves are to play an active role in all aspects of development. We are therefore introducing new or reinforcing existing policies and programmes to ensure that the contribution of the community to social

development is improved. Similarly, our plan of action and strategic framework involve close collaboration with the private sector, churches and non-governmental organizations. We recognize that for our strategy to be effective there needs to be an integrated approach to focus all our resources on addressing the social development challenges of this millennium, directly and comprehensively.

We have indeed set our goals through dialogue with all our partners; however, to translate those goals into reality requires more than political will and determination — both of which we have. We need resources. At this point may I draw the Assembly's attention to the opening address of the Secretary-General, in which he stated that the rich countries have an indispensable role to play in assisting the poorer countries. He further went on to say that sustainable change will not be possible,

> "unless the leaders and peoples of developing countries show real determination to mobilize their own resources — above all, their own human resources — to deal with their own social problems." (*A/S-24/PV.1*)

We have the will, and we are determined to mobilize our limited national resources, and if need be we will restructure public expenditure so as to meet the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. However, we need to develop our capacity to plan and deliver social services; to produce accurate, comprehensive and timely information on social conditions and trends; and to assess the social impact of our development policies, plans and programmes. It is in this connection that from this rostrum I urge the international community to provide assistance — particularly with respect to capacity-building — thereby enabling us to focus our resources in an integrated manner and improve targeting of the poor and vulnerable in our societies.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. B. G. Chidyausiku, Chairman of the delegation of the Republic of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chidyausiku (Zimbabwe): I wish first of all to join previous speakers in commending you, Mr. President, for the able and skilful manner in which you are guiding our deliberations. We are confident that with your wise counsel this special session will be a resounding success. May I also express my delegation's deep appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the very informative and forward-looking report on global efforts to eradicate the scourge of poverty since the Social Summit, held in Copenhagen in 1995, as well as for his suggestions as to a possible way forward.

Zimbabwe strongly believes that justice, equity, social security and poverty reduction are necessary prerequisites for sustaining peace, security and development, not only in Zimbabwe but also in the entire world. In this regard, the Government of Zimbabwe welcomes the convening of this special session and fully supports this collective process to take stock of our progress in achieving the Copenhagen commitments. Indeed, this process should offer us the opportunity to exchange views, experiences and knowledge, all of which should arm us with renewed strategies to deal with the challenges that lie ahead.

For many developing countries the implementation of the Programme of Action of the Copenhagen Summit met with a number of constraints. These have included, among others, heavy foreign debt, unstable world prices for major commodities and poor balance-of-payment support, as well as unfavourable terms and trends in international trade. On the domestic scene we have seen high inflation, a shrinking private sector, growing unemployment, unequal resource distribution and deepening poverty. This situation has been worsened by a high incidence of natural disasters.

The goal of full employment and the creation of meaningful jobs in developing countries has been undermined by resource constraints, which have seriously limited our ability to generate employment, even through labour-intensive public works programmes. The increase in casual labour and informal employment has forced many of the poorest, especially women and children, into low-paying, exploitative forms of employment. At the same time, low levels of social security are generating new forms of social exclusion and perverse coping mechanisms. Zimbabwe would like to see a situation in which economic reform programmes increasingly began to include social protection mechanisms.

As a member country of the Group of 77, we fully support the positions that were taken in Havana during the Group of 77 South Summit, held in April 2000, as well as at the Group of 15 Summit held in Cairo earlier this month. We are concerned that

developing countries have not been able to share in the benefits of globalization on an equal footing with developed countries. We urge developed countries to take into account the possible negative impact of their domestic economic, monetary and fiscal policies on developing countries and to apply measures that are sensitive to the needs and interests of developing nations.

The terms of international trade have worsened, and financial resources have declined in most developing countries, including Zimbabwe. We underline the need to redress the imbalances in the present World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements, in particular with regard to the right of developing countries to promote their exports, which has been curtailed by the abuse of such protectionist measures as anti-dumping actions and countervailing duties, as well as tariff peaks and escalation. We also call upon developed countries to fully implement special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries, to strengthen the system of preferences, and to give the products and services of special interest to developing countries free and fair access to their markets. While recognizing the value of environmental protection, we believe this should not be used as a non-tariff barrier to restrict international trade. At the same time, we insist that the issue of labour standards should be dealt with in the International Labour Organization (ILO).

For too long, the poor have been viewed as victims of circumstances, deserving simply sympathy and handouts. We strongly believe that poverty is a denial of fundamental human rights. If it is viewed as such, Governments, the international community and international lending institutions should be accountable for failing to take appropriate action to stop the continued spread of poverty. Current development models, especially those built around economic structural adjustments, have been emphasizing the efficacy of economic growth in poverty reduction.

Experience has shown, however, that growth alone is not capable of reducing poverty, especially in the developing world, where structural rigidities in resource access and ownership have restricted it to the "trickling down" of the fruits of growth to the poor. There is therefore a need for a new paradigm shift wherein development models would emphasize equal participation in the generation of growth and equitable distribution of its benefits.

In this regard, we view positively the recent indications by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to change focus from a market reform orientation to one that brings poverty reduction to the fore in their new mission to "fight poverty with passion and professionalism for lasting results".

However, our experience has shown that World Bank and IMF loans to developing countries often come with unacceptable conditionalities characterized by the shifting of goalposts, which points to political manipulation of these institutions by the powerful countries.

We also note with deep concern the continuing decline in official development assistance, which has adversely affected social development activities in developing countries. We support the G-77 stance to urge developed countries to honour their commitment of directing 0.7 per cent of their gross domestic product to official development assistance, and within that target to earmark 0.15 per cent for the less developed countries. We also urge that the provision of official aid should respect the national development priorities of developing countries and that conditioning official development assistance in a manner that hampers social development should not be condoned.

The much-needed investments in infrastructure and rural development initiatives have suffered a setback due to external debt and macroeconomic constraints. As a result, social services are dwindling, with the poor having to pay for basic services such as water, health care and education, to name but a few. In support of the G-77 position, we welcome the expanded initiative in favour of heavily indebted poor countries, but consider that it should be extended, expedited and made more flexible, and that new and supplementary resources should be contributed. We therefore advocate a renegotiation of formulas applicable to low- and middle-income countries, with the aim of promoting the design of a strategy for external debt that addresses the interrelated problems of finance, the economy and development.

A concerted campaign of disinformation has of late been carried out in the press against Zimbabwe by forces opposed to the Government's efforts to ensure the equitable redistribution of land in Zimbabwe. As is well-known, the land question has been and remains the central pillar of social, political and economic development in Zimbabwe. The current situation, in

which 70 per cent of the country's best arable land is in the hands of less than 1 per cent of the population, while 99 per cent of the population is congested in the remaining 30 per cent of mostly infertile and arid land, is unacceptable and unsustainable.

That is why the Government of Zimbabwe has embarked on a Land Reform Programme whose primary goal is to reaffirm and reassert its sovereign right over its land and natural resources, which was taken away during the period of British colonial rule. Under this Programme, the Government will acquire 5 million of the 12 million hectares of best arable land and redistribute it to thousands of land- hungry Zimbabweans. In Zimbabwe, and indeed in the whole of southern Africa, attempts to deal with poverty without addressing the historical imbalance in land ownership would be futile. We hope this special session will recognize this fact and come up with solid action plans to address the issue of assets for the poor.

With the world becoming one big village, it is extremely difficult to distinguish between domestic and international issues as they affect individual countries, either directly or by contagion. Thus any attempts to assess the progress achieved in implementing the Copenhagen commitments should be made in the context of what is happening not only at the national level, but also at the global level.

Such a global and regional approach to the assessment of implementation processes presents us with many new challenges. The varied impacts of this phase of globalization has created a new urgency for us to respond to poverty, social inequality, human rights abuses and issues of inequity. New evidence suggests that there is a need to build institutional capacity for tackling poverty at the international, regional and local levels, as poverty is now a global issue requiring global solutions.

The creation of assets for the poor is critically important to poverty reduction. Lending arrangements should focus on creating assets for the poor and on improving access to key resources such as land.

HIV/AIDS has grown to be an international pandemic that is increasing poverty and the vulnerability of the poor. There is a need to ensure that the issues of survival and health care are not simply left to the vagaries of the market. Certain drugs and medicines central to the treatment of HIV/AIDS should be made affordable and readily available. The international community should therefore integrate the ethics of human development into trade negotiations, especially in the context of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

With the world becoming even more interdependent, the persistence of endemic poverty and deprivation in the South constitutes a potential threat to the security and development of the world. In this context, we welcome the initiative for the creation of a world solidarity fund. We underline the importance of this fund in contributing to the efforts to eradicate poverty.

This special session has proved a unique opportunity for the international community to correct the mistakes of the past and to take serious steps to eradicate poverty. By the actions we take at this summit, we can, and should, change the predicament of all humankind for the better. Our inaction today will condemn not only us but also future generations to grinding poverty and marginalization.

Five years after Copenhagen, and in taking stock of the developments since then, we should ask ourselves if we have ameliorated the situation of the poor and if we have made a difference. If not, where have we gone wrong? We should not get stuck in conferencing but should put into operation the commitments made and undertakings begun so far. We can and must make a difference by the decisions we take today.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pascal Couchepin, Federal Counsellor and Head of the Department of Economy of Switzerland.

Mr. Couchepin (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly has heard a number of appeals for the elimination of poverty throughout the world. Figures have been enumerated that show the daunting state of our world for some people and that express a message of hope for others. It does not matter what significance we attach to these figures; the important thing is that we should draw the essential lessons to guide our social development activity and combat poverty. These figures, first and foremost, reveal the global nature of the challenges before the world. They illustrate the need to work together in a spirit of solidarity to identify solutions which will give a human face to globalization.

As I say, let us give a human face to globalization. This is the absolutely essential condition for our societies and peoples to provide their support to this evolving process. Without their popular support, we may increase the reticence of public opinion to globalization. So let us not repeat the errors of the past; let us not forget history. Some 70 years ago, in vigorous opposition to globalization, some preferred not to open up but to turn in on themselves, to choose nationalism, protection and mercantilism. And we all know where that led the world.

That is not where we are today. We have tools at our disposition to act and to strengthen confidence in globalization, and we should use them.

Our discussions here in plenary are an encouraging sign for renewed political will to translate into reality the commitments undertaken in Copenhagen. We hope to leave Geneva with a strengthened consensus on the objectives of social development and a framework of action for Governments and organizations.

All the views expressed in our Assembly show that there is no ready-made recipe to guarantee social development. But each and every one of us is aware that the way plotted out in Copenhagen in 1995 was the right one, because it has the legitimate support of the community of nations. It is based on a recognition that economic and social policies complement and strengthen each other. The concern for solidarity and pragmatism expressed in Copenhagen illustrate the thoughts of the Greek philosopher Plato, who wrote in Book IV of *The Republic*:

> "Our aim in founding the State was not the disproportionate happiness of any one class, but the greatest happiness of the whole."

It was in that spirit that Switzerland looked forward to Geneva 2000, because of our belief in the preponderant role of the political will expressed within the United Nations, an international forum that permits open discussion on the human dimension of globalization, with a view to augmenting prosperity for all.

But, Switzerland alone cannot do very much. This is why my country hopes that the General Assembly will support dialogue between States, international organizations and civil society. This is how we will improve understanding of the social effects of globalization, by dealing with the links between trade, development and labour.

To promote the North/South dialogue, Switzerland has acted, and will continue to act through its strategies to combat poverty, particularly by reducing the debt burden for the poorest countries. The financial resources thus released will be invested for the purposes of social development. Additionally, Switzerland will continue its action within the World Bank and with the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative.

Switzerland, of the belief that decent work is one of the priority factors for social integration, is committed to integral respect for the fundamental rights of workers throughout the world. It supports the development at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) of a world strategy for employment. Switzerland also believes that access to education and training is the key that unlocks the door to social integration and decent work.

It is Switzerland's hope that access to social protection networks and health care be considered as a shared asset of humankind.

Lastly, we would like to strengthen and safeguard the formidable economic potential for growth and development that globalization can engender. Let us continue to negotiate in that spirit and with determination within the United Nations system and in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

It is up to the United Nations and its specialized agencies to ensure a global social facet to accompany the rules of the world economic game. We must lay down the contours of a genuine social and global contract with all of society's players for a State to be strong and centred on priority tasks — international organizations, businesses, trade unions and non-governmental organizations together. Solidarity among nations, and within nations, cooperation among all actors in society — these are the new points of reference to ensure globalization's success.

Geneva 2000 has promoted new initiatives along those lines. These initiatives may not be very spectacularly worded, but let us make sure that they are truly significant in the field.

The President: I give the floor to His Excellency Bishop Diarmuid Martin, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace of the Holy See.

Bishop Martin (Holy See): The Copenhagen Social Summit stands out among all the recent summits and world conferences, because it addressed the concerns of the human person in a global manner, rather than stressing specific sectoral aspects of the development process. In this way, the documents of the Summit have contributed to the emergence of very important goals and targets for the entire community of nations.

The Copenhagen Summit stressed particularly the multidimensional aspect of poverty in today's world. A multidimensional phenomenon can only be addressed by a multidimensional response. Indeed, in the five years since Copenhagen, we have learned more clearly that there is no single answer to the challenges posed by poverty and exclusion. No single ideology — no single economic model — contains a totally adequate response. No one sector by itself can satisfactorily address the question. We have seen even more clearly that no single nation or economic bloc on its own can hope to resolve questions which have assumed a global dimension. We need a truly international community, in which each sector and each nation assumes its appropriate role and responsibility, within a framework of solidarity and respect for the rights and dignity of each person.

In the years since Copenhagen, the need for integral and comprehensive approaches to social development has been reconfirmed. There is a renewed sense of the importance of economic growth and of markets. But, there is also an increasing understanding of which policies of social investment are most likely to generate a sustainable combination of economic growth and social progress. Growth must be integrated with other economic and human values, so that it becomes "quality growth" — that is, growth with equity, growth with stability and growth with ecological sustainability. Economic growth, especially in a knowledge-based economy, cannot be separated from investment in people, in the creative and innovative capacities of the human person, the primary resource of any economy or of any society.

Mr. Al-Douri (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Alongside the emergence of promising new models of fostering economic and social development, there have been a number of unsettling developments in the past five years. The first of these is the inability of the community of nations to provide the necessary means — both financial and in terms of political will — to achieve goals that have been solemnly proclaimed and recognized as being both attainable and desirable. This applies to the commitments assumed at Copenhagen, as well as to many of those related to debt relief initiatives and even to emergency relief.

A prerequisite of any community of nations is that promises be honoured by the powerful and by the weak. More than ever in human history we need an international order in which relations between States are based on the rule of law and respect for internationally agreed norms and commitments, but also based on trust and solidarity. All States, rich and poor, must have equitable access to the decision-making processes of this, our globalizing world.

The failure of nations to live up to their solemnly proclaimed commitments weakens the confidence of the citizens of the world in international norms and instruments, at the very moment that the importance of such norms for peaceful world cooperation is growing day by day.

We have lived in recent years through an unprecedented era of scientific progress, which has produced great benefits for humankind, but we have not yet found the science of adequately sharing, the science of ensuring that the benefits of progress are equitably made available to all the citizens of the world. Today we still have the opportunity to lay the foundations for equitable long-term access by the poorest countries to knowledge, especially that knowledge essential for health, human survival and development. But we must act rapidly if we wish to avoid a consolidation of the current divide. Our generation will be judged by history perhaps above all on this one question: did we or did we not successfully address the challenge of placing the extraordinary fruits of human genius in the field of information technology truly at the service of all of humankind?

To achieve such sharing we need a new international culture of solidarity. A world that leaves millions of its citizens on the margins of progress has no right to claim for itself the title "global". The term "global" has to become synonymous with "inclusive". We need globalization with solidarity, globalization without marginalization. There is no sustainable alternative to solidarity. The only other option is a

world based on the protection of individual interests, a world founded on fear, suspicion and exclusion.

In too many parts of the world today, the primary causes of poverty are linked to war and conflict. War and conflict impede all forms of social stability and progress. They cause disastrous human consequences in terms of loss of life and injury, even to children and the most innocent. The natural environment and basic human infrastructures are damaged, setting back the progress of decades even.

We can no longer afford the luxury of living with the illusion that the social and the security agendas of international order can be separated. The security of a nation is sustainable only when its citizens can live in security and flourish, enjoying their God-given talents. We all know well the costs of insecurity and conflict. It is surely not beyond the ability of the community of nations to finds ways of effectively addressing issues such as the economic exploitation of conflict situations or massive disproportionate arms spending. These are questions that affect the lives and livelihoods of millions of people today.

Peace is a very rich concept which in its biblical roots sums up what we today would call social development. Peace is a relationship between people and peoples, in which they live in harmony among each other and in harmony with their own environment. It is a concept in which each person can realize his or her talents fully and in which the goods of creation — both material and spiritual — are equitably shared.

Our meeting five years after Copenhagen, and our commitments in these days, constitute a recognition that as we begin a new century and a new millennium there are many who aspire to such a vision of humankind living in peace, a world in which nations, rich and poor, can share the wealth that each possesses — not just wealth as an economic resource, but in its full human, cultural and spiritual sense. May God bless our common effort.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Ridha Bouabid, Chairman of the observer delegation of the International Organization of la Francophonie.

Mr. Bouabid (International Organization of the la Francophonie) (*spoke in French*): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the francophone countries that are participating in this special session.

The francophone countries participating in this twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly solemnly reaffirm their adhesion to the commitments made at the World Social Summit in Copenhagen. They stress the continued relevance of the Declaration and the Programme of Action adopted in 1995; the commitments undertaken on that occasion and the progress made since; their will to fulfil these commitments and objectives through dialogue and cooperation; their commitment to work together to meet the challenges of globalization by strengthening international solidarity.

In the course of the last five years the question of social development has not become any less relevant. Our countries note with satisfaction that most national policies, as well as the strategies implemented by international organizations, now include a significant social dimension.

The new realities of the world economy have, moreover, shown the strong interdependence between the social and economic dimensions. Over a period of time, one of these dimensions should not be built up to the detriment of the other. Ethics, fairness, integration, human security, viability and development are today the key words of the new paradigm of cooperation and partnership.

Progress — the results of which have not always been shared equitably — has been registered since the Copenhagen Summit. We have seen encouraging developments as regards the fulfilment of certain objectives, such as literacy, life expectancy, school attendance, access to basic social services and equality between men and women. In this context, we can be gratified by the holding in Dakar, last April, of the World Education Forum.

Many commitments, however, are far from having been met. We must note that the human person is still not at the centre of social development. With 1.3 billion people living on less than $1 per day, and some 800 million people suffering from malnutrition in the world, the first objective of Copenhagen — the elimination of extreme poverty — unfortunately remains absolutely relevant. In a world that is increasingly wealthy, the maintenance of such imbalances is yet more unfair — and hence more shocking.

To cite just a few, some of the major themes of the Copenhagen Summit — the objectives of full employment, social integration, development in Africa and of the least-developed countries, increasing resources for social development, and the objectives relating to structural adjustment programmes — are far from having been achieved.

The situation in the world prompts us to avoid any recourse to solitary models and to reject temptations to turn inward, to unilateralism or protectionism. To this end, dialogue, cooperation and, even more, international solidarity are required more than ever.

La Francophonie is based on common ethical values: in particular the shared conviction that democracy and respect for human rights provide an essential foundation for the realization of lasting social development, which must be nourished by dialogue and diversity.

Several ways to protect against temptations of isolationism and unilateralism are the North-South dialogue; the expansion of South-South cooperation, in particular through the strengthening of exchanges between Asia and Africa and through the improvement of technical cooperation among developing countries; the increase in initiatives supporting a multipolar world; the strengthening of development capabilities; and the development of the private sector supported by effective regional integration. More active cooperation strategies should be elaborated with the donors so as to eliminate poverty and allow all to have access to basic social services.

In this regard, the European Union-Africa Summit, held in Cairo last April, which brought together the heads of State and Government of Africa and the European Union, laid the groundwork for new and practical regional cooperation. A plan of action was decided at that time, whose objectives largely support those of the Copenhagen Summit. The project for a free trade zone between Europe and the Mediterranean by 2010 should eventually strengthen the unity between the economies of the two regions. Facing the challenges of globalization, in which the motivating factor is the market economy, solidarity should be expressed forcefully at the international and national levels.

At the national level, the State remains the main guarantor of social development strategies and hence of social integration. In ensuring proper functioning of the market economy, the State must also anticipate economic and social developments to adapt market mechanisms and prevent all forms of exclusion through targeted measures.

The State must exercise this major function in a transparent and responsible manner. In order to succeed it must receive backup and support from all actors in economic and social life: local communities, businesses, social partners, non-governmental organizations and grass-roots communities. The emergence of new partnerships within civil society in many countries is an encouraging factor. The State must — and this is one of its main callings — promote social equity within the context of solidarity among all members of the national community.

At the international level, solidarity must be exercised on a priority basis in the following areas: continuing debt-alleviation measures for the heavily indebted poor countries; the search for innovative solutions for medium-income heavily indebted countries, where social indicators are poor; the reversal of the tendency to reduce official development assistance; opening up of markets to the export products of developing countries; strengthening cooperation to face transnational challenges; the search for a more coherent and transparent international financial structure; better protection of populations by greater sharing of medical progress; and action in support of basic work standards and the fight against child labour.

Important decisions concerning debt cancellation of the heavily indebted countries were taken by the G-8. Priority should be given to their effective implementation. It is vital that contribution pledges to financing the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative be kept. Based on that, the ambitious objective of having three-fourths of all countries concerned benefit between now and the end of 2000 should be pursued.

To keep the timetable, all actors must be mobilized: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, creditor countries and debtor countries. This common effort to fight poverty must be emphasized. Debt cancellation should contribute on a priority basis to social progress. At the same time, international action is necessary to prevent and manage

financial instability excesses, their shocks and their human costs.

At the same time, concerted national and international action has become necessary to settle as best as possible the matter of the indebtedness of medium-income developing countries in order to resolve potential long-term debt-servicing problems through innovative solutions such as reinvestment of debt in social programmes.

The target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product targeted for official development assistance, solemnly reaffirmed at Copenhagen, is still far from being achieved. While declining in recent years, official development assistance must remain an essential pillar of support of the international community for the poorest developing countries. It is therefore highly desirable that all efforts be made to reverse the tendency of decline in official development assistance. In this connection, the recent development seen through the latest statistics of the Committee of Development Assistance is rather encouraging.

Access of export products of the least developed countries to markets should be strengthened. The Secretary-General's report for the Millennium Summit correctly highlights that the countries that have succeeded in becoming integrated into the global process of exchange have been the first beneficiaries of the potential for economic growth and social development stemming from it. All countries unfortunately are not in a position to derive opportunities linked to the open markets. To enable the least developed countries to benefit from the advantages of multilateral trade, the industrialized countries should commit themselves to improving access to all their exports.

In this connection, we should welcome the joint initiative of the European Union and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to hold in Brussels in the first half of 2001 the third United Nations conference on the Least Developed Countries. Among the encouraging prospects to be pursued, the European Union proposal to ensure open access, exempt from duties and quotas, for most goods from least developed countries should be stressed.

Given transnational challenges, international cooperation should also be strengthened. Priority should be given to the development of world action to effectively deal with increasing problems going beyond the possibility of Government intervention, including fighting organized crime, the disturbing deterioration of the environment and the fight against the great pandemics.

This international solidarity must also be exercised with respect to migrant workers. They should be ensured the benefit of protection provided by the relevant national and international instruments, taking specific and effective measures to fight their exploitation. To this end, all countries are encouraged to consider the full ratification and implementation of international instruments relating to migrant workers.

Less than 10 per cent of all medical research throughout the world is invested in the health problems affecting 90 per cent of the world population. This shocking disparity widens the inequality between populations in terms of health.

The unprecedented scope of the spread of AIDS and its particularly high cost on the development of those countries that already the poorest require the mobilization of public authorities and the international community as a whole. World solidarity must prevail to end a scourge that has already claimed 16 million victims and has infected 33 million persons, two thirds of which are in Africa.

The international community as a whole should mobilize. A prevention effort by the States affected by this scourge is necessary. Under the impetus of Governments, the main pharmaceutical industries of developed countries also have a major role in developing a vaccine as well as in providing access to the poorest to existing treatments. In this connection, we can welcome the initiative of United Nations AIDS to create a partnership involving public and private actors to fight AIDS in Africa and the project of organizing a tripartite conference on access to medications. In the same spirit, we welcome the recent summit held in Abuja, Nigeria, to promote the fight against malaria.

An unavoidable phenomenon, globalization requires a credible and sustainable social context. The implementation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, should be the object of strengthened cooperation, particularly through the promotional follow-up mechanism. This instrument of solidarity, which does not justify recourse to protectionism, enables us to implement cooperation

measures and technical assistance for countries still experiencing difficulties in fully realizing their obligations stemming from the ILO Charter.

In this connection, our countries commit themselves to strengthening their cooperation, to enable the full implementation of basic labour standards, the only guarantees of a well-balanced social world order. Likewise, North-South cooperation within the ILO should enable us to effectively fight child labour through focused cooperation.

Other innovative ways could also be explored such as the creation of a world solidarity fund, financed by voluntary contributions, stressing the elimination of poverty, as was emphasized during the recent European Union-Africa Summit at Cairo.

Social development for all in a globalizing world, to refer to the title of the Preparatory Committee of the special session of the General Assembly, is a goal which all French-speaking countries fully share. These countries wish today to signal that they are fully committed to realizing the goals underlying that aim in a spirit of exchange, cooperation and mutual support inherent in the francophone world. If there is to be a climate of mobilization and special ardour at the new century or even, in the positive sense, a millennial syndrome, it must be embodied in the voluntary and ongoing struggle for social development in every country and for each member of the international community.

We are well aware of the difficulty of the tasks and challenges ahead of us. By accepting that they must meet them, the States members of the International Organization of La Francophonie intend also to shoulder their duty to engage in dialogue in diversity, something which now more than ever is a necessity in the context of globalization, so that human beings will remain at the centre of future political, economic and social change.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): I note that the statement just made by the representative of the International Organization of La Francophonie was a rather lengthy one.

(*spoke in English*)

I now give the floor to Mr. Poul Nielson, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid of the European Community.

Mr. Nielson (European Community): It is a great pleasure for me to address this special session of the General Assembly. The World Summit for Social Development, held in Copenhagen in 1995, set an ambitious new agenda of support for employment, poverty eradication and social integration in its diverse dimensions, such as health, education and gender equality. This has raised the profile of social questions at the international level. Five years on, depending on whether you look at the impact on policy and priority-setting or at the impact on the reality in developing countries, different assessments may be made.

I turn first to the impact on policy. On the policy level, the message from Copenhagen has proved its value and its impact. The agenda called for new and innovative solutions to the problem of multilateral debt, introducing the thinking that lead to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. What was then a progressive demand has now come to be widely embraced, including by the international financial institutions. Poverty reduction, which was spearheaded at the social Summit, has become a mainstream development objective and is being turned into operational reality in development programmes around the world.

Over the past week, we have seen a reaffirmation of the goals set out in the Copenhagen Programme of Action, which the European Community welcomes. The Copenhagen commitments, strengthened by the European Union's Treaty of Amsterdam, which entered into force in May 1999, are priorities both at the European level and in its external policies, especially as regards developing countries and the least developed countries.

The Copenhagen commitments have served as a fundamental element of the European Community's newly declared policy orientation for development cooperation, aimed at a closer link between poverty eradication and social development, and at improved policy coherence. With this strategy, the European Community has joined the mainstream of how good development cooperation is done. The Summit commitments have also been fully incorporated into the recently signed partnership agreement between the European Union and the Group of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP). That agreement is based on the notion that combating poverty and placing human development at the centre are essential for sustainable

development and for the integration of developing countries into the world economy.

At the multilateral level, the European Community is actively promoting the launch of an inclusive new round of trade negotiations within the World Trade Organization, where development concerns can be effectively addressed, so that benefits and opportunities for growth provided by the multilateral trading system will be available to all countries.

Political responsibility of Governments is a key factor, as national strategies must be fully owned by national Governments and civil society. Full ownership is evidenced by national action plans attaching overall priority to poverty reduction in domestic policies and targeting difficult issues such as land reform, income distribution and taxation. The absence of locally produced statistics on these issues is a real impediment to effective national action. Developing countries live the problems we are discussing here. It would be sad if action plans addressed only statistics available in donor capitals.

The Copenhagen agenda is sophisticated in portraying poverty as more than just low income. Texts on the links between poverty, environment and gender were discussed and agreed. Good development cooperation is much more than transfer of funds. There has to be an honest dialogue among equal partners so as to ensure that aid targets the priorities that are set by end beneficiaries.

It must be acknowledged openly that corruption and the lack of governance breaks down the social structures and values on which economic development and poverty reduction are built. The Union knows from its own experience that economic reform and growth must go hand in hand with social cohesion. In this sense, good governance is an important part of poverty reduction.

The Copenhagen process is one of a number of follow-up processes to United Nations conferences. Three weeks ago, the General Assembly, at its special session on the theme of "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century", adopted further commitments. We welcome the recognition of this outcome in the Copenhagen process as well; supplemented with the Treaty of Amsterdam's strengthened provisions on human rights and gender equality, this result will guide the Community's action in this field in coming years.

The key objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action are also relevant within the European Union. Important new initiatives have been taken since the Copenhagen Summit, including the European employment strategy. The March 2000 Lisbon session of the European Council marked a further breakthrough, setting ambitious targets in the employment field, and envisaging new initiatives to modernize social protection systems and to promote social inclusion that will have a decisive impact on the eradication of poverty within the European Union.

I turn next to the impact on realities. The international consensus seems to be moving in the right direction. However, we have yet to see an impact on the reality in developing countries. Globalization involves increased risks of marginalization, in particular for the poorest countries. The figures are compelling: for example 86 per cent of global consumption is concentrated in 20 per cent of the population, and in absolute terms an increasing number of people live below the poverty threshold. Policy is in place; institutions are there. But we need to inject more political energy into the implementation of these policies.

And let us openly recognize that donors must be more generous. There is no excuse for cutting aid budgets. I am pleased to say that the European Union aid given through its Community programmes handled by the Commission remains stable. It represents 10 per cent of global official development assistance. Combined with its member States, the European Union accounts for more than 55 per cent of global official development assistance. Everybody needs to do more.

Debt relief is one of the few areas where progress seems to be materializing. The enhanced HIPC initiative must be fully financed. Next week, the Commission is signing an agreement on a one-billion euro contribution from the European Community to meet the costs of this faster, deeper and broader debt relief. We encourage other donors to follow that example.

So, to sum up, it is normal for ideas to precede action. A five-year lead-time for achieving results on the enormous challenges before us may not seem to be so long. The Copenhagen Programme of Action was

breaking new ground in 1995. In 2000, it stands confirmed, with its imperative objectives further stressed by time.

In line with the aim of this special session, the follow-up and implementation of the Copenhagen Programme of Action needs to be further strengthened and made more result-oriented in order to respond to the diverse challenges of sustainable social development in a new reality of globalization.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mr. Constantinos Pilavachi, Director-General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe.

Mr. Pilavachi (Council of Europe): The Council of Europe warmly welcomes the holding of this special session as a valuable opportunity to give renewed impetus to the important commitments entered into by the world community in Copenhagen five years ago. During this period, the 41 States members of the Council of Europe, covering between them almost the whole of the European continent, have strengthened their commitment to social development. This new emphasis on social questions found expression at the highest political level when at the second Council of Europe summit, held in October 1997, our heads of State or Government identified social cohesion as one of the foremost needs of a wider Europe.

Moreover, the Council of Europe decided, with the support and encouragement of the United Nations Secretariat, to organize a European Conference on Social Development as a regional contribution to the preparation of this special session. That event, which took place in Dublin at the kind invitation of the Irish Government in January of this year, enabled European countries to reflect together on the message they wished to bring to Geneva It led to the adoption by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, sitting at the level of Foreign Ministers, of a political message to the special session. That message has been circulated to participants along with two other documents specially prepared for the special session, namely the Chair's summing up of the European Conference on Social Development, and a paper entitled "Social Development in Europe: the Contribution of the Council of Europe".

In its political message, the Committee of Ministers declared that

> "social development provides an essential basis for the development of inclusive societies, sound economic growth and the prevention of conflict."

The Council of Europe promotes social development in Europe in two main ways: through the European Social Charter, which enshrines a wide range of social rights in the form of an international legal instrument with a sophisticated supervisory machinery; and through its strategy for social cohesion, by which it is developing an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to the principal social problems facing European countries today.

The strategy for social cohesion operates by monitoring the application of the Council of Europe's legal instruments in the social field, by developing agreed policy guidelines and exchanging information on good practice, by promoting bilateral cooperation with member States wishing to reform aspects of their social policies, and by developing pilot projects in the field and making loans for specific projects through the Council of Europe Development Bank.

The areas of social policy in which the Council of Europe is particularly active are the following: social protection; access by excluded persons, or by persons at risk of exclusion, to social rights, especially social protection, housing and employment; improving the situation and protection of children in Europe, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the social integration of migrants and members of disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

For the future, and in order to give specific follow-up to this special session, we are planning to address ourselves directly to the question of poverty and social exclusion, for example by offering Governments help in developing integrated national anti-poverty strategies. In our view, it is necessary to devise strategies with precise objectives, targets and monitoring mechanisms, and to involve poor people in planning and implementing them.

Although the mandate of our organization focuses primarily on the situation within our member States, we do not neglect the worldwide context of social development. Our North-South Centre, based in Lisbon, seeks to build awareness among Europeans of the fact that we live in one interdependent world. As a specific contribution to the Copenhagen + 5 process, we have organized a public campaign entitled "Global interdependence and solidarity: Europe against poverty and social exclusion".

Moreover, as part of the follow-up to this special session, we are planning to organize next year, jointly with the United Nations Secretariat, an interregional conference on social standards. At a time of increasing awareness of the need for international agreement on minimum social standards in a global economy, the Council of Europe is keen to share with other world regions its experience in developing and implementing standard-setting instruments in the social field. The Council of Europe is increasingly committed not only to strengthening social cohesion in Europe but also to making a contribution to international action in favour of social development.

In conclusion, I can do no better than to quote again from the political message of the Committee of Ministers, which states that

> "the Council of Europe will examine the outcome of Geneva 2000 with a view to participating actively in international efforts to take forward the social development agenda."

The Acting President: I now give the floor to Mrs. Pilar Norza, Senior Regional Adviser of the International Organization for Migration.

Mrs. Norza (International Organization for Migration): It is a pleasure for me to address the Assembly on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

Migration is a worldwide phenomenon. Much is said about international migration flows from East to West and from South to North. But Australia, New Zealand, North America and Western Europe are actually the destination of only a fraction of the world's migrants. Most migrants move from one developing country to another. The motivation for emigrating is often economic: to enhance opportunities, improve living standards and try to share in the wealth of the more developed economies. But migrants are vulnerable, and are nearly always deceived by false promises and unrealistic expectations.

Migration has always been a feature of human history. It has in some periods been viewed as a positive force for social and economic development. We know from experience that migration is beneficial only when human movements are orderly.

Five years ago, in Copenhagen, the international community drew up a series of promises with a view to ensuring social development. One of those promises, the reduction of poverty, was one of the key objectives. Although progress has been made, many of the statements made here this week have made it clear that many of the promises made in 1995 have not been fulfilled.

Along with Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations, IOM, through specific activities for migrants and their families, has contributed to ensuring that some of the promises of Copenhagen relating to migration are fulfilled. Of the 150 million migrants who crossed the threshold of the new millennium, many have benefited from the results of globalization, but others are victims of this phenomenon. The promises made in Copenhagen have not been fulfilled in an equitable fashion.

Migrants face a growing contradiction, both in the sphere of respect for their rights and in their social integration. On the one hand, the international community has impressive and sophisticated machinery — made up of treaties, conventions and recommendations — that define and protect the human rights of migrants. We do not need new international instruments, we simply need to apply those that exist. The International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families incorporates in a single instrument all migrants' rights — be these civil, economic, political, social or related to work. So far, only 12 countries have ratified the Convention, whereas 20 signatories are required for its entry into force.

On the other hand, migration is no longer seen as a positive force, or as a factor for economic and social development. Often migrants are considered as different, they are subjected to exploitation, marginalized and, indeed, humiliated. There is much evidence of discrimination in jobs, education and other services. Migrants, because they come from a different culture, can encounter racism and racist violence, and can be treated as scapegoats for all the internal ills of our societies. Often we underestimate and, indeed, we forget the contributions made by migrants. The considerable remittances sent by migrant workers contribute to the economies of their countries, but migrants make it possible for their host societies to progress and to maintain their prosperity. Migration is a constant feature of the history of mankind, and at certain times migrant workers have been seen as a positive force for social and economic development.

The battle against the trafficking and smuggling of migrants requires a strengthening of international cooperation, so as to avoid any further tragedies, such as the one that happened recently in Dover, where 58 migrants lost their lives. They were trapped in a container that was designed to transport goods, not human beings. Unfortunately, this tragedy has highlighted the growing phenomenon of irregular migration, the causes of which are closely linked to the talks being held this week here in Geneva. We need to step up the struggle against criminals who, for financial gain, take advantage of and abuse individuals who seek a better life.

In recent years the battle against the trafficking and smuggling of migrants has become a matter of transcendental importance for the IOM. These practices often involve multiple violations of human rights. Trafficking is a complex phenomenon. For example, people whose human rights are being violated may turn to traffickers to help them migrate. And human rights violations may occur in the course of a journey, and they do not necessarily cease upon arrival. I can also mention as an example the violence and exploitation to which women and children are exposed in conditions of genuine slavery. The battle against trafficking in human beings involves a series of activities that range from preventive measures — such as the dissemination of information — to the application of the law and activities for the rehabilitation of victims.

International cooperation is essential, and it is necessary for all the relevant national and international bodies to be involved — including non-governmental organizations, legal institutions and those responsible for enforcing the law — in order to provide an appropriate response to the trafficking in human beings and to see that the perpetrators are punished.

The general situation of migrants has considerably changed, but much still remains to be done. In general, migrants are not entitled to express themselves in order to claim their inalienable rights. Today more than ever we see that countries have become either countries of immigration, transit or emigration; accordingly, the whole international community must devote greater attention to the concerns generated by violations of such rights and the role played by migrants in society.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Mahamat Doutoum, Assistant Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Doutoum (Organization of African Unity) (*spoke in French*): It is a great honour and an immense privilege for me to participate in this special session of the General Assembly on social development and to represent here the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Allow me, on behalf of the OAU and its Secretary-General, Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, to heartily congratulate the President on his brilliant election to chair this important conference and for the excellent manner in which he has directed our work throughout this week. I would also like to express our deep thanks to the host country, Switzerland, for its welcome and hospitality, and to very sincerely thank His Excellency Mr. Adolph Ogi, President of the Swiss Confederation, for the very significant speech he made during the opening of this special session. We hope that he will agree to convey to the Swiss people the gratitude of the OAU for the quality of the cooperation between his country and Africa and the OAU's hopes that this cooperation will continue to grow and improve to the mutual benefit of Switzerland and Africa.

The OAU is very pleased that this special session is being held. It offers the community of nations an appropriate framework to review the progress made throughout the world since the 1995 Copenhagen Summit, and it also provides an opportunity to proceed to deeper consultations on other social actions aimed at achieving a more reasonable level of global integration. We are yet more pleased because many social development activities particularly concern Africa — it being the continent most exposed to the many unfortunate circumstances that stand in the way of harmonious social development and thus cause poverty to deepen and continue to exist.

It is for this reason that the OAU has placed the problem of social development at the centre of its concerns. That is also the reason for everything that has been done in the last five years to encourage and support social action in accordance with the recommendations and Programme of Action agreed upon at the Copenhagen Social Summit and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 47/92.

With specific respect to the Copenhagen recommendations, I would like to stress that they have been duly considered, refined, updated and relayed by

major political bodies of the OAU, namely the Assembly of Heads of State and Government and the Council of Ministers, after having been considered beforehand by other appropriate sectoral bodies, particularly the conferences of African ministers of health, education, labour and social affairs. On the basis of those general guidelines, African States have taken appropriate measures to translate the recommendations into reality for the greatest possible benefit of their respective populations. The role of the OAU as a framework for dialogue, consultation, coordination and agreement among all African States has been of considerable assistance in mobilizing and raising the awareness of these States to attain the objectives of promoting concerted policies and coordinated strategies at the national, regional and continental levels with a view to reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable development commensurate with the expectations of the populations concerned. In this regard, it should also be said that regional consultations have been held in other appropriate African regional bodies, such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, with the active participation of the OAU in order to undertake an evaluation of the progress made to reduce poverty, create jobs, improve teaching and health and to establish an appropriate socio-political environment for good governance in Africa.

It is in the framework of those consultations, and in particular of the meetings held in Nairobi, Ouagadougou and Marrakesh, that it has been possible to assess what has been done to implement the objectives established at the Copenhagen Summit. It is true that many things still need to be done to fully attain those objectives. But the OAU's actions, together with many other factors, have made it possible to chalk up some relatively successful results in the area of social development since the Copenhagen Summit.

From 1995 to 1999, we have seen infant mortality rates fall considerably as a result of improvements in primary health services and vaccination campaigns, in which many African heads of State have been personally involved. The same can be said for social protection, particularly with regard to medical and health coverage. Modest progress has also been made in the area of training, although there are still many gaps to be rectified in educational systems and with regard to the lag that exists in adapting national legislation to the times. The rights and well being of African children and the process of integrating women into development have seen overall improvement, even though much remains to be done in order to reach the desired balance.

I would like to take this opportunity once again to express the appreciation of the OAU to the General Assembly for having decided to devote a special session at New York this very month to the question of promoting the rights of women. In the course of that session, the OAU was able to renew its commitment to eradicating all forms of discrimination against women in all spheres of life. It is in order to translate its commitments into reality that the OAU has proclaimed a decade for education in Africa, to cover the period from 1997 to 2006. For that same reason, the OAU is working with African businesswomen to ensure the economic independence of women and their integration into the development process.

Finally, some people will today recognize that very significant progress has been made in recent years in the areas of respect for human rights, democratization, freedom of the press, freedom in general and good governance, even though there are still some readjustments to be made because initial experiences in those areas have not always been successful in some regions. The progress that has been made in certain key sectors of development has unfortunately often been thwarted or even made void by poor economic performance, endemic unemployment and the chronic underemployment — elements that perpetuate the misery and poverty of which women, children and other more vulnerable groups are unfortunately the main victims.

Other major obstacles to OAU action include the proliferation of political and social conflicts that are ravaging Africa and the persistence of diseases such as AIDS and malaria, which expose populations to death on a massive scale. Those conflicts tend to generate disastrous refugee situations and the displacement and resettlement of persons who thereby live under abominable conditions, with every imaginable consequence that has on their physical and mental health.

In order to respond to the fervent resurgence of such conflicts, in 1993 the Assembly of Heads of State and Governments established the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. That Mechanism devotes a good deal of its time to these

serious problems. Under these circumstances, the OAU has no alternative but to join with member States to work towards establishing peace and security to bring about development, as it is understood that without peace there can be no possible development and that without development there can be no lasting peace. This is a tremendous challenge because one thing depends on the other, and the resources to deal with them are not always available in Africa. At any rate, it would be pointless to think that there could be peace while populations continue to live in misery and poverty and without adequate food, health services, education and housing and a modicum of personal and collective prosperity.

It is for all these reasons that I would like to conclude by asking on the international community to give more support, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to the efforts of the OAU and its member States to ensure peace in Africa and to create the necessary conditions for sustainable and harmonious social development.

The Acting President: I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Pierre-Yves Simonin, Chairman of the observer delegation of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Mr. Simonin (Sovereign Military Order of Malta) (*spoke in French*): Allow me, on behalf of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta, to extend to the President my most sincere congratulations on his presidency, which he is conducting with so much distinction.

I would like to extend our gratitude and pay tribute to the Government of Switzerland and to the authorities of Geneva for their very warm hospitality.

In granting permanent observer status to the Sovereign Military Order of Malta in 1994, the General Assembly welcomed an institution that can claim, on the basis of its nine centuries of history, a lengthy tradition of assistance to others. Serving the most disadvantaged, working for the eradication of poverty and disease and for social justice, and defending dignity and human rights are but a few of the tasks that the Order shares with the United Nations. By virtue of tradition and experience, the Order is also qualified to assume these tasks in solidarity with the international community.

In order more effectively to meet today's requirements and challenges, we have constantly been adapting our methods and strategies to accomplish our mission of peace and to play the role that the community of nations is entitled to expect of the Order in international humanitarian relations. In this connection, may I cite a recent statement by the Grand Master of the Order:

(*spoke in English*)

> "The humanitarian assistance that we provide without religious and ideological discrimination reassures and guarantees that the fundamental values of humanity survive. This is our essential contribution to achieving the goal of international peace and worldwide security."

(*spoke in French*)

This expresses the importance that my Government attaches to this special session on social development and the issues which challenge us all.

There is no doubt, as we have seen throughout this week, that the Copenhagen process has not yielded all the expected results: inequalities have worsened; exclusion has not diminished, respect for human rights has all too often fallen short; and the dignity of women, men and children has all too often been flouted. In brief, the globalization of the economy has not always kept pace with the globalization of human and spiritual values, as shown by the many ethnic and religious conflicts throughout the world.

But Copenhagen undeniably marked an unprecedented commitment by the international community. Some achievements should encourage us. The 1995 Summit, above all, prompted a spirit which has not only been maintained, but has also been strengthened here in Geneva, as seen in the text to be adopted later at the conclusion of this session. The Order of Malta welcomes this political will reaffirmed today.

While the Order of Malta has usually carried out its many assistance activities after the event, it is aware of the imperative need to tackle the root causes of the problems afflicting the majority of humankind, and is prepared to make an active contribution to doing so. The Order's concept of the dignity of the human being — which is comprehensive, including its spiritual dimension — permeates the spirit of its

commitment of brotherhood towards the poorest and most vulnerable people, whoever they are.

Spread throughout five continents, the activities of the Order of Malta extend to 115 countries, 57 of which use their own structures. We maintain diplomatic relations with 84 States; the Order's worldwide bilateral diplomatic representations alone are a valuable contribution to the implementation of its assistance programmes, whether national or international. I am happy to express here the appreciation of the Order to the Governments concerned and to many others with which we are called upon to cooperate, for their cooperation and help in the realization of these activities, whether in their own countries or for the benefit of third countries.

Thanks to these structures, the Order is in a position to maintain, on a world scale, hundreds of hospitals, clinics and medical-social centres, homes for the elderly and the handicapped, units for the terminally ill, and structures for refugees and for drug addicts. Moreover, in recent years the Order has seen an expansion of its national auxiliary services, such as first aid posts, transport of the sick, and intervention during disasters and accidents, mobilizing several tens of thousands of volunteers.

Internationally, the Order's range of activities has also enjoyed a remarkable expansion over the last decade. Relations with the United Nations have flourished, both in New York and in Geneva, headquarters of organizations and institutions with which, due to the humanitarian nature of our work, we collaborate and have dialogue: the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). Cooperation has been established with some non-governmental organizations at the operational level or with regard to standard-setting. Finally, I would like to mention ECOM -- the Emergency Corps of the Order of Malta — an international emergency corps which can be rapidly mobilized. It began its work in the Great Lakes region of Africa; was involved in Honduras during Hurricane Mitch; and was also involved in the Kosovo conflict, principally in Albania, where, at the request of the High Commissioner for Refugees, it set up camps for displaced persons.

In conclusion, may I cite three areas of the Order's activities relating specifically to health matters of concern to the General Assembly.

The first is the fight against leprosy, a scourge which, although fortunately on the decline, continues to rage in many countries. Combating this disease, which is a phenomenon linked to poverty, has been among the Order's traditional missions for centuries. We are continuing our efforts for its elimination, efforts that the International Committee of the Order of Malta coordinates through its programmes of training, early detection, health care and rehabilitation in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Secondly, in the fight against HIV/AIDS, the International Committee has programmes to prevent the vertical transmission of the HIV virus from infected pregnant women to their unborn children.

The third area is the provision of medicines and their transport to the poorest areas, a matter which is among the traditional activities of the Order.

The Order of Malta, faithful to its traditions and aware of its responsibilities, will continue to contribute to the common effort to meet the needs and aspirations of those who call upon us and who invest their hopes in us.

The Acting President: I give the floor to Mr. Carlyle Corbin, representative of the United States Virgin Islands.

Mr. Corbin (United States Virgin Islands): I have the honour in my capacity as Minister of State for External Affairs of my Government to address the Assembly on this occasion of the twenty-fourth special session. I wish to thank the Government of Switzerland for its fine hospitality, and to acknowledge the magnificence of the historic facilities in which we are conducting our deliberations.

We express our appreciation to the General Assembly once again for its continued support in facilitating the participation of the small island associate member countries of the United Nations regional Economic Commissions, in the capacity of observer, in the United Nations world conferences and special sessions of the General Assembly since 1992, consistent with a modern application of the principle of universality which is enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We are hopeful that this status will shortly be

extended to us in other important deliberations of the General Assembly.

It is of particular significance to my Government that the 1995 World Summit for Social Development was held in Denmark, with which my country has a historic link dating from the eighteenth century through the early twentieth century, when we were known as the Danish West Indies. We express our appreciation for the continued contribution of the Kingdom of Denmark to the alleviation of poverty, with its devotion of a full 1 per cent of its gross domestic product for overseas development assistance, exceeding the 0.7 per cent commitment made by other developed countries. We applaud Denmark for its support in the ongoing programme of preservation and repatriation of archival and other material of the Danish West Indian period as a contribution to the sociocultural development of our people.

While the advent of globalization has accelerated growth in most of the developed world, most of the countries of the South have yet to see the promised benefits of this phenomenon. A 1999 United Nations University report concluded that the benefits of globalization remained distant and elusive, and this can be no better illustrated than when examining the difficulties facing many small island developing countries whose economies and the social development of their peoples are being impacted by this new globalized world. Indeed, for small island developing countries, achieving sustainable social development is by and large a function of the level of adjustment to globalization.

While conditions related to smallness are formidable, they are often exacerbated by a difficult transition from reliance on models of development primarily based on export agriculture to a service-based economy more conducive to a globalized world, and by the resultant need for often massive retraining as workforce requirements change.

Yet even as transitional processes are under way, globalization offers an added sense of urgency to small island countries, which are challenged to compete on a so-called level playing field in an environment purported to be both free and fair but that is often neither, amid a rapidly changing set of global business and trading rules. In effect, small size, a high degree of openness and a lack of economic diversification have always rendered small island developing countries vulnerable to shifts in world economic conditions. The rapid pace of globalization has intensified that vulnerability, especially given the concerns about the impact of devastating natural disasters, in particular hurricanes, on the social gains that have been achieved. The substantial social dislocation caused by the effects of natural disasters on small island societies has set back progress in social development for years, and there have been many examples to this effect since the convening of the World Summit in 1995.

In the past, small States were able partially to offset structural disadvantages by specializing in activities that enjoy preferential access in some large markets. These avenues are rapidly disappearing as a result of evolving world trade arrangements and rules. In illustration of this point, two World Trade Organization rulings in 1999 — one striking down preferential access of Caribbean bananas to Europe and the other successfully challenging the foreign sales corporation mechanism — are having a major impact on the adjustment process of many small island Caribbean countries. The recent designation of these countries, including my own, as harmful tax jurisdictions by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development is a unique example of how, irrespective of the promise of globalization and open trade, countries which are developing their service economies are facing disturbing protectionist measures. These rulings, designations and the like have the potential to cause significant social disintegration in many small island developing countries.

In the words of the Copenhagen consensus,

> "the global transformations of the world economy are profoundly changing the parameters of social development ... [and the] challenge is how to manage these processes and threats so as to enhance their benefits and mitigate their negative effects upon people." (*A/CONF.166/9, para. 14*)

Small island developing countries can be significant beneficiaries of globalization, or they can be overwhelmed by the challenges of competing with larger, more developed economies. This is the critical dilemma as small island countries work to overcome their vulnerabilities and seek to engage successfully the "new economic order", which has been so fundamentally redefined since this term was first introduced so boldly and with much promise decades ago, with the aim of providing a framework for the

transfer of resources and technology to the developing world, and with the goal of furnishing the tools to address the vulnerabilities that are facing the developing world today.

In closing, I would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the thirtieth session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, held in Windsor, Canada, last June, during which time the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Saint Lucia, George Odlum, told member States that at the beginning of the twentieth century, the richest countries in the world were nine times richer than the poorest countries of the world, and that at the end of that century the rich countries were 69 times richer than the poorer ones.

It is this glaring fact that must serve to motivate the international community to use all of its resources to resolve these issues of poverty alleviation and sustainable development and to foster a new global economic environment that will allow the developing countries the required space to make the required adjustments to globalization.

As the Secretary-General has said,

> "there could not be a better time to focus on the real social problems facing the human race and on the most effective ways of tackling them."

That time is now.

The Acting President (*spoke in Arabic*): I give the floor to Mr. Daw Ali Swedan, Assistant Secretary-General for Social Affairs of the League of Arab States.

Mr. Swedan (League of Arab States) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased, on behalf of the League of Arab States, to welcome the efforts made to organize this conference and to achieve an outcome that will ensure progress and welfare for all.

I would like also to pay tribute to the Government of Switzerland for the work it has done in preparing for this conference and for creating the necessary conditions for it to achieve the desired results.

The World Summit for Social Development, held at Copenhagen five years ago and in which 186 States participated, including 117 heads of State or Government, made it possible to emphasize the importance of social development and its role in global development.

The Arab participation in that Summit was testimony of the Arab countries' belief in the importance of social development and its role in the realization of peace and progress, both nationally and globally.

The commitment of the Arab States to the results of the Summit has been an incentive for them to do everything they could to achieve its objectives, despite the difficulties they have confronted in its implementation. These difficulties are shared by all developing countries. Nevertheless, the Arab States have registered important achievements that are reflected in their national reports presented to this Assembly.

However, what has been achieved is not fully commensurate with our hopes and goals. Many sectors of our Arab society continue to suffer from poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and other difficulties, some of which have been inherited and others new. The greatest obstacle is Israel's occupation of Arab territories, which poses a continuing danger to the stability of the region and the security of its peoples, and therefore to their progress and sustainable development.

The embargo imposed on some of our States has had nefarious consequences, the effects of which will be felt by coming generations. Thus it should be viewed from a humanitarian standpoint, in accordance with the objectives of the Summit, the purposes and principles of the United Nations, and in particular the principles of human rights and the rights of peoples to development and to the fruits of development.

We call upon the international community to work jointly to create an international atmosphere conducive to ensuring balanced social development based on moral foundations by upholding the rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals and the right to development of all peoples and by affirming the importance of working to attain the objectives of Copenhagen. It must remove obstacles to social development, incorporate policies of poverty reduction, provide productive employment for all, and strengthen social integration and international solidarity in efforts to achieve the objectives of bilateral and multilateral cooperation in overcoming poverty, unemployment and social disintegration, because these phenomena fuel extremism and violence and therefore threaten the security and stability of societies.

We call upon donor countries to fulfil their commitments, particularly to provide 0.7 per cent of their gross national product to help developing countries fulfil the 20/20 initiative for the funding of social development, which is a moral political commitment towards attaining the objectives undertaken by all at Copenhagen; to cancel the debt of the least developed countries both bilaterally and collectively, including debt owed to international financial institutions; to reduce the debt burden of developing countries and expand the process of converting these debts for humanitarian development purposes; to ensure respect for human rights, while refraining from using them as a political pressure tool thus stripping them of their humanitarian content; to recognize cultural diversity and diversity among civilizations; to respect the independence of States and recognize their territorial integrity; to recognize the importance of interaction between all civilizations and the use of their positive features to strengthen humanitarian values; to refrain from using boycotts or economic sanctions because of their negative effects on the poor and on people with special needs, particularly women, children, the disabled and the elderly, as well as on the development process generally; to recognize the need to resolve conflicts through peaceful means and to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, without exception; and to prevent the production and marketing of conventional weapons and ensure that the money spent on them is used instead for development and for reducing poverty and unemployment.

International efforts should be made to ensure just and lasting peace, particularly in the Middle East, and to reject the settlement, expansion and hegemony policies exercised by Israel. The Palestinian people should be able to exercise their legitimate rights to establish their independent State on their national soil.

Since approximately 3 billion human beings suffer from marginalization, poverty, hunger, disease and lack of access to education, housing and primary health care, we call on the international community to establish an international solidarity fund, as proposed by Tunisia, to fight poverty, financed by Government contributions and special institutions and used as an international tool to fight poverty, particularly in the most disadvantaged regions.

In Copenhagen, five years ago, we placed all our hopes on establishing a mechanism. Five years later, we have discovered that we still need time to produce the necessary mechanism. I hope in another five years we will not have to say that this was simply idle talk.

The Acting President: I call on Mrs. Misalaima Nelesone, Secretary for Health, Women and Community Affairs of Tuvalu.

Mrs. Nelesone (Tuvalu): It is a great honour and privilege for me to represent the Government of Tuvalu at this follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to convey to representatives our great appreciation for the condolences expressed by heads of State of participant countries and individuals to our Prime Minister, The Honourable Ionatana Ionatana, and the people of Tuvalu, regarding the 18 young girls and their matron who lost their lives during the night of 9 March this year in our only secondary school in Tuvalu. Such gestures have given us a feeling of having a family in the global world, despite our isolation. I feel, therefore, that this conference is in the same spirit: that we are gathering here as a family to deliberate on solutions and strategies related to all facets of life.

Tuvalu is a group of atoll islands in the Pacific Ocean with a population of about 10,000 people, and is barely 4 metres above sea level. Tuvalu, like many Pacific countries, is a long distance from markets; we are more vulnerable to environmental change, particularly rising sea level, and we also lack greatly the resources to meet the needs of our people.

We feel that we, the people, are the only resources for the economic development of our country. Education is therefore the only key; hence the move by the Government of Tuvalu to establish an education system called "Education for life", which emphasizes education for all. This year, the Tuvalu Government, under its national budget, has increased the allocation for pre-service education for overseas scholarships by 36 per cent. Currently, education at the primary level is free, and by 2001 free education will be extended to the secondary level as well, which reflects the growing emphasis placed by the Government of Tuvalu on education.

In health, we are in the process of strengthening our public health through the improvement of primary health. Medical treatment is free for all Tuvaluan nationals, and a few years ago a medical treatment scheme was established to assist our patients to be treated overseas.

Tuvalu, in its development progress, is coming to rely heavily on the cash income system, as the subsistence existence and economy are becoming less important for most of our people. Moreover, like most people of the Pacific islands, Tuvalu people are living in a world in which our traditional way of life conflicts with the modern lifestyle. These are the causes of the social dilemmas that our people in Tuvalu and the Pacific region are facing.

From the regional perspective of social development, Pacific island States are vulnerable and have unique development needs. Pacific island States are scattered over vast areas of ocean and are not immune to global change. We, the Pacific island countries, have undergone considerable changes, and there have been significant improvements in key social sectors. However, major development challenges are still faced in the Pacific region. Governance and social development remain vulnerable, which is demonstrated by recent events in Solomon Islands and the Fiji Islands.

As with many countries around the world, Pacific island countries like Tuvalu have also undergone economic reform. Social considerations have not always been effectively integrated. Pacific Governments, through their own regional forum, have committed themselves to the integration of social development with economic programmes. Pacific island States face numerous environmental and social challenges.

This is the first time Tuvalu has participated in the deliberation of issues relating to social development. Tuvalu's participation in this special session indicates its solidarity with the rest of the world in the work towards social development for our people, families, communities and nations.

The theme of this special session, "achieving social development for all in a globalizing world", really suits the Tuvalu of today. Despite our isolation from the rest of the world, we also feel the impact of globalization socially, economically and environmentally. Due to these changes, our tradition, cultures and values are being challenged. Our Government is very much aware of these changes and is determined to establish modified structures and programmes to suit our traditions and the modern world. In 1997 the Falekaupule Act was passed, which instituted the power of our traditional chiefs on all islands. This is part of a decentralization process to strengthen island autonomy and allow each island to be responsible for its own development.

We feel therefore that our approach to social development in this millennium needs to be holistic. This year, the Tuvalu Government will endorse the first social development and social welfare policy to outline and identify our vulnerable and disadvantaged groups, which include the disabled, people in poverty and youth, and to promote equality for men and women and for the elderly. That policy also dictates the need for the improvement of social services, including health, education, legal and financial institutions to support and provide sound services for the social development and welfare of our communities. This indicates an integrated approach by different sectors to participating in this trend of social development.

In implementation of our policy, legislation for the elderly and the disabled has been drafted and will be adopted by 2001. In that legislation, for the first time, our elderly and disabled will receive income support from the Government. Seven other pieces of legislation have been identified in the policy, and these will be drafted in the near future. They will spell out the need to support families in their domestic traumas, to provide safety nets for individuals and for our seamen and workers, to improve the education system, to design social-work systems and to enhance equality for the elderly and the disabled. With such demands regarding the implementation of this policy, the Tuvalu Government will establish a fully staffed department by 2001 to coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate programmes for the advancement of social development and welfare in Tuvalu. A national corporate plan will be drawn up before the end of this year. Tuvalu is determined that its social development and welfare programmes will ensure self-reliance among the people. The Government is in the process of designing an integrated model approach that will encourage interdepartmental inputs involving non-governmental organizations and the island communities regarding the delivery of social development and welfare services and programmes. This special session and the deliberations carried out in the forums during this week will contribute greatly to that model.

The Tuvalu Government supports gender equality, and in 1997 ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A Department for Women was established in 1999 to

implement, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Convention. Earlier, in 1995, it had ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and there has been much work towards its application at the national level. The highlight of our activities this year will be Tuvalu's accession to full membership of the United Nations at the upcoming Millennium Summit in September 2000.

Those are Tuvalu's commitments at the national level as well as in the global arena, joining with the other countries of the world in their attempts to address the social and economic problems faced by the world today and to make a better and safer world for future generations. It is worth mentioning too that, despite the Tuvalu Government's commitments and its dreams for the advancement of social development and welfare, the Government feels that it will need a lot of technical and financial assistance to implement and consolidate our commitment to social development and welfare in Tuvalu. We know that our attempts for social development are still young, but we feel that the foundation and the fabric of social development and welfare are solidly based and will be woven into our sharing practices in our extended families and our communal lifestyle.

Many times, we are so overwhelmed with very sophisticated strategies that are foreign to us, resulting in unsuccessful programmes and unsustainable ventures. We feel that globalization has made us vulnerable. But we also feel that we are the only people who will know how to confront these changes. That is, knowing what is within us will enable us to embrace and accommodate these changes in a more confident way. That is vital for us, and we are determined that what already exists in our society will be blended with introduced practices to form a holistic and sustainable approach for the successful implementation of social development and welfare in Tuvalu.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Yao Graham of the Third World Network.

Mr. Graham (Third World Network): I am grateful for the opportunity to address the General Assembly on behalf of the caucus of African civil-society organizations at this special session of the Assembly. The Copenhagen World Summit for Social Development remains the biggest-ever gathering of heads of State or Government, an attendance which underlined the important challenges of social development all over the world. The Summit identified social development in Africa as needing special attention. Yet since then, social conditions have worsened in most African countries. This has been in a global context of expansion of prosperity for the North and growing poverty for the majority of peoples in the South. That is not to deny the growth of inequalities within the North.

A strikingly lower number of heads of State or Government have taken part in this special session, which sadly confirms our fears about the unsatisfactory level of commitment to the outcomes of Copenhagen. As we go home, the caucus of African civil-society organizations would like to draw attention to three issues: the unpayable burden of debt which is stifling social development in Africa and in many other developing countries; the problem of HIV/AIDS and poverty; and creating an enabling environment for social development and the role of the United Nations.

The crushing burden of external debt has undermined the capacity of African Governments to provide and ensure even the minimum of resources for social development. We have seen continuing resistance by major Powers to the unanimous demand of global civil society for total debt cancellation. The so-called enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative formula does not provide an adequate framework for dealing with the debt problem. It is centred on the continuation of the destructive structural adjustment policies that have contributed significantly the poverty, social disintegration and unemployment in Africa.

African civil-society organizations are ready to ensure that any resources freed by debt cancellation will be invested in achieving the social development goals set in Copenhagen.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is claiming more lives on the African continent than all wars and natural disasters we have had in the past two decades. For Africa, one of the root causes of the spread of HIV/AIDS is poverty. This is not merely a health issue, but also an issue of social and economic development. That link must be explicitly recognized in all countering strategies. These must also take account of the explosion of other diseases of poverty in Africa.

Since Copenhagen, the international environment for the advancement of social development has deteriorated. International terms of trade have moved

against African exports. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remain the instruments of a few Powers. The World Trade Organization has emerged as a much stronger voice for the transnational corporations of the North. Threats to the powers and the role of the United Nations as a forum for all humanity have increased. This is not an enabling environment for the advancement of social development.

In this United Nations forum we want to express particular concern about the threats to the United Nations system. This concern is the basis for the African caucus joining with other civil-society organizations to condemn the "better world for all" document put out by the Secretary-General, the IMF, the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development a few days ago. The slow suffocation of the United Nations that we have been witnessing over the past few years is rooted in the very agenda that this document puts forward. These policies, if accepted, will take the social development agenda backward and will undermine what has been achieved.

Neo-liberal economic policies that have done so much to undermine social development should not be allowed to wear the garb of the United Nations. As peoples whose lives have been negatively affected by the imposition of these policies and who value the United Nations, we shall do our bit to make sure that this nightmare does not become a reality.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Ashraf Tabani, President of the International Organization of Employers (IOE), speaking on behalf of the IOE and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

Mr. Tabani (International Organization of Employers): The international business community, represented by the International Organization of Employers (IOE) and the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), welcomes this opportunity to present the views of the business community to this twenty-fourth special session, which has been convened to follow up on the commitments entered into at the Copenhagen Social Summit.

The Social Summit recognized the need for a sound policy framework, both nationally and internationally, to achieve economic growth, as well as growth in employment and income. In fact, in our intervention in that plenary the ICC/IOE underlined that the principal means for achieving these goals was for the private sector to play a central role in job creation.

Almost all countries realize that the market system is the key to achieving these goals, and the private sector is looked upon as the principal source of employment creation. Since the Summit five years ago the performance in this regard has been mixed — in many areas robust and impressive, while, on the other hand, the employment situation and the alleviation of poverty in many parts of the world continue to be unsatisfactory and cause for concern. Thus the commitments made in Copenhagen remain as valid and challenging as they were five years ago. The business community reaffirms its endorsement of this programme once again here in Geneva.

Since Copenhagen, a heated debate has developed on the issue of whether globalization has been a positive force for making progress on the goals of the Social Summit, or if it has been inimical to such progress. There is ample evidence that globalization has been a powerful impetus for economic betterment, opening up new economic opportunities, not only in the traditionally industrialized countries, but, more importantly, in developing countries where such opportunities were not available.

We are all aware that many countries for one reason or another have been unable to benefit from the technology and capital coming into the market, that the pressure of global competition can result very often in painful local social dislocation and that large pockets of poverty continue to exist in many countries. The answer to these economic and social challenges is not, as many assert, to slow down or even halt the process. In the words of Secretary-General Kofi Annan:

> "The cure lies not in protesting against globalization. The poor are poor, not because of too much globalization but because of too little – because they are not part of it."

Recent studies confirm that countries that opted to open their economies and integrate into the global economy over the past 20 years have been growing at annual rates of more than 4 per cent, with improved living standards across all sectors of society, while those that did not barely achieved a growth rate of 1 per cent. We must therefore look more closely at the reasons for this disparity.

Among the countries unable to achieve growth, the proximate cause in an important group has been civil or international conflict or endemic internal disorder, which has seriously undermined their economic potential. A larger and more diverse group consists of countries that lack major aspects of good governance or incur heavy foreign debts because of faulty domestic policies and Government mismanagement, or those where large populations suffer from widespread debilitating diseases. The people of these countries are thus denied the fundamental conditions for economic growth and participation in the global market.

Business all over the world is ready to take reasonable, even large risks in making the investments necessary for economic growth and job creation, provided it has a minimum level of assurance of stability in the marketplace. It is primarily the responsibility of Governments to provide the institutional structure and macroeconomic and microeconomic policies that both meet social objectives and encourage business growth. There needs to be monetary and fiscal stability as well as the rule of law. Governments also need to provide a regulatory framework that assures competition, free flow of investment and the protection of property rights, including intellectual property rights. Most countries need to do more in the way of structural adjustment, the three main elements of which are stabilization, liberalization and privatization. At the international level, business needs multilateral rules, in support of national policies, that facilitate trade, financial transactions and investment.

Two major developments since Copenhagen related to social development need to be mentioned here. The first is the Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and Convention No. 182, on the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, adopted by the International Labour Organization in 1998 and 1999 respectively. Both of these important mechanisms were sponsored and promoted by the business community. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's call for a Global Compact with business as a voluntary initiative has received considerable support, with many enterprises and employers' organizations throughout the world supporting the principles of the Global Compact. We believe that real social progress, through the promotion of the nine principles of the Compact, is possible when both multinational enterprises and grass-roots businesses are engaged and committed to the realization of these nine principles on a purely voluntary basis.

It is our hope that this Summit will be able to make further progress on the Programme of Action established five years ago. We need to keep moving forward if the aspirations of social justice are to be reached. This needs to occur in a spirit of partnership with Governments, and there is no evident need for the imposition of United Nations guidelines for corporate responsibility, which will stifle rather than promote business and investment at both the national and international levels. We must recognize that the basic challenge facing both Government and business is to ensure that as globalization moves forward, it continues to produce more winners.

Within the economic and commercial realities in which it must operate, business will continue to make its full contribution to the goals set by the Copenhagen Summit in order to generate and sustain productive employment.

The President: I give the floor to Ms. Catherine Bernard, of the Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture.

Ms. Bernard (Service and Research Foundation of Asia on Family and Culture): It is my privilege, and I am grateful, to present the statement by civil society organizations from the countries of the Asia-Pacific region during the twenty-fourth special session of the General Assembly.

In the concluding session of this process, we the civil society organizations from the countries of the Asia-Pacific region need to voice our disappointment and regret that the commitments made by Governments during the Copenhagen Summit for Social Development in 1995 remain largely unfulfilled. From the reports heard and the evaluations made, we realize that these commitments were not implemented due to improper financial investment and distribution in the countries themselves, as well as continually decreasing resources from the rich countries and the Bretton Woods institutions.

We the civil society organizations from the Asia-Pacific countries strongly urge the international community gathered here in Geneva to assure and support the following proposals.

The first proposal is debt cancellation for all developing countries.

Second, those countries that are getting in the way of currency transaction taxes should withdraw their objections.

Third, monopolies and transnational companies should ensure the availability of life-saving drugs in the developing countries.

Fourth, we call for corporate social accountability and for responsibility and transparency by Governments and among Governments and private sector organizations.

Fifth, we call upon Governments to ensure that civil society organizations participate and have a voice in the plans, programmes and development processes in their countries.

Sixth, we call upon the international community to respect and regard countries' natural resources and to refrain from eroding, depleting or monopolizing such resources, which are necessary for the security of the livelihood of its citizens.

Seventh, we call for the strengthening of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations to ensure the accountability of the Bretton Woods international financial institutions and the World Trade Organization.

The President: I now give the floor to Mr. Fackson Shamenda, of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions.

Mr. Shamenda (International Confederation of Free Trade Unions): The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), representing123 million trade union members around the world, strongly welcomed the 1995 Copenhagen Social Summit. We believe the Social Summit reasserted social priorities in place of free market liberalization. Its 10 commitments constituted progress in tackling the global crisis of unemployment and poverty. But since then, far too little has been done.

Global unemployment and underemployment involve a total of 900 million people. The number of export processing zones, where workers have virtually no rights, has almost doubled. At least 250 million children are at work, and women comprise 70 per cent of the world's poor. We must not find ourselves repeating such regrets five years from now.

We must redefine and change globalization so that it works for the people. We need increased debt relief and development assistance for developing countries to help billions of workers, especially in informal work, to improve their jobs and lives. We need improved national and international mechanisms for involving trade unions and respecting fundamental workers' rights. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and its follow-up is one of the building blocks in the construction of a more humane and less volatile global economy. The international organizations must build social policy, including the ILO Declaration, into their policies and recommendations.

Tackling the roots of poverty also requires actions to achieve equality and freedom from discrimination. A further priority should be worldwide progress towards providing everywhere four pillars of social protection for all: health care, unemployment insurance, old-age pensions and decent education for peoples' children.

After this week's special session is over, our task will be to follow up: to translate the political commitments of Governments here at the summit into meaningful progress for working people and their families all over the world.

In this spirit of participation, and on behalf of all the non-governmental organizations that have spoken and that will speak, I would like to ask you, Mr. President, to distribute the speeches of all the non-governmental organizations to the Assembly.

If we can truly join together to mobilize global solidarity, we can make the difference. We can overcome greed, desperation and despotism. We can build social and economic justice and freedom from oppression and discrimination for all. It is in that spirit that I address you today. This special session is taking place in the inaugural year of the twenty-first century. It provides the opportunity to reassert a people-centred model of development. It can give the United Nations a leading role in defining the twenty-first century as one that can fulfil its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of all the people.

Our task is to work together in order to achieve that goal. Together we should be able to do it.

The President: I now give the floor to Ms. Elmira Teymur Süleymanova, of the Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre.

Ms. Süleymanova (Azerbaijan Women and Development Centre): It is my great pleasure and privilege to present the Assembly with the vision of the non-governmental organizations in the Eastern European countries, including those of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) as a part of the Economic Commission for Europe non-governmental organization regional caucus.

In spite of the diversity of political, economic, social and cultural situations in Europe, one cannot ignore and separate the problems that are affecting people both in the Eastern and Western parts of Europe, since they are interrelated. Our general challenges and obstacles in the Eastern European countries are: the negative impact of globalization aggravated by transition; destroyed economies and the erosion of social protection systems; high unemployment; low income and lack of security.

They also include different forms of marginalization; growing disparities between rich and poor, both within and between countries; the uncontrolled development of an informal economy, resulting in the exploitation of vulnerable people, including human trafficking, especially in women and children; and wars and armed conflicts, with the resulting suffering of the civilian population and limited access to basic goods and services.

We call on Governments to recognize the violations of basic human rights created by these challenges. Therefore, we propose that Governments actively promote human rights — especially economic, social and cultural rights — for all people living in their countries by undertaking the following actions.

First, they must show greater political will and commitment and be accountable at the national level. Secondly, they must accelerate reconstruction of the economies of countries in transition by providing specialized education, training and job creation. Thirdly, they must design and implement gender-sensitive policies and programmes for social protection that are equally accessible to all groups, including women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, Roma, refugees and internally displaced persons. These groups should also be regarded as actors in the process of rebuilding society.

Fourthly, Governments should recognize the spread of poverty and the growing inequalities within their own countries and reaffirm the role of public expenditures, which should be regarded as an investment and not as costs to be reduced to the minimum possible as long as they are based on principles of equality and sustainable development. They must also recognize the role and partnership of non-governmental organizations in monitoring these expenditures for transparency and cooperation.

Fifthly, and last but not least, they must provide immediate means to obtain housing, adequate health care and education, and uphold the right of persons to live in peace and security in their own communities.

The strength of non-governmental organization lies in their capacity for mobilization and solidarity. We wish to continue our collaboration with Governments and United Nations bodies in order to implement fully the commitments of the World Social Summit, with a view to achieving social development and a stable, safe and just society in this globalizing world.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Bruce Thordarson of the International Cooperative Alliance.

Mr. Thordarson (International Cooperative Alliance): Placing people at the centre of development is the purpose of cooperatives. Cooperatives, as I am sure everyone here knows, are autonomous associations of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

It is for this reason that the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) and its 234 member organizations in 94 countries, representing over 750 million individuals around the world, join the international community in the renewed commitment to address the problems of poverty, unemployment and social exclusion.

The 1995 Copenhagen Programme of Action laid out a series of actions that Governments could undertake in partnership with civil society, and it identified many activities that could be carried out specifically with cooperatives. We know, for example, that cooperatives create and maintain employment in

both urban and rural areas. They provide income to members and self-employment to more than 5 million people in Europe and more than 14 million in India, to give just two examples. Cooperatives are large-scale employers. They provide over 100 million jobs around the world and are the second-largest employer in many countries of Africa.

It is in recognition of the contribution of cooperatives to creating new jobs, and sustaining existing ones, that the United Nations chose to focus this year's sixth United Nations International Day of Cooperatives on the theme of employment promotion. This Day, in fact, will be celebrated worldwide tomorrow, 1 July.

By virtue of the their capacity to create and provide employment, cooperatives have made advances towards reducing poverty. Financial cooperatives mobilize capital and provide people with secure institutions for the deposit of savings. Consumer cooperatives provide households with affordable goods and services, and user-owned cooperatives — such as housing, utility, health and social care cooperatives — provide affordable access to basic services.

Gender equality too has been a goal of the ICA and its members. We know that social justice will not be attainable in societies that do not provide equal opportunities to both men and women. The International Cooperative Alliance has recently adopted a global gender strategy which sets out targets and timelines for progress at both the institutional and membership levels.

However, cooperatives, like other enterprises, know that their operations are significantly affected by external challenges in the political and economic environment. The recent report of the Secretary-General on the status of cooperatives around the world focused its attention on the legal and administrative needs which cooperatives have and on the role which Governments can play to support cooperatives. It also included an annex of guidelines aimed at creating a supportive environment for the development of cooperatives. We are very encouraged and happy that in a General Assembly resolution adopted last September, the United Nations decided that this would be an important area for future activity and that it should be further explored. We hope that the General Assembly will adopt next year these guidelines on cooperatives when they reappear before it in New York.

We know that economic and social development can be realized only if it is undertaken in effective partnership, with Governments and civil society working closely together. I can assure the Assembly that the worldwide cooperative movement is fully committed to the objectives of Copenhagen and is prepared to work full speed towards their accomplishment.

The President: I give the floor to Mr. Hector Bejar of Social Watch.

Mr. Bejar (Social Watch) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the regional Latin American and Caribbean Caucus, which is participating in this special session.

In Latin American and the Caribbean, instead of a decrease in the poverty of many, there has been an increase in the wealth of the few. Children continue to live in abject poverty and to work in conditions of semi-slavery. There has been no progress in the eradication of discrimination against women, indigenous peoples, ethnic minorities and Afro-American communities. International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169 has not been put into practice.

No jobs have been created for the millions of unemployed and underemployed. The conventions of the ILO have not been implemented, nor has the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

An environment conducive to social development has not been created. In many Latin American and the Caribbean countries, democracy is limited by the armed forces and transnational entities or there are dictatorships disguised as democracies.

Structural adjustment has concentrated wealth, has left out countries without assets and has generated more poverty and exclusion.

It is said that there are no resources for social development, but if there are, they are available to pay an external debt that asphyxiates us, to save the banks and the big businesses that go bankrupt, to acquire arms and to militarize internal conflicts. We demand that our Latin American Governments, the international financial institutions and the Governments of the North contribute additional resources for social development.

The sums approved for the Colombia plan, the Manta military base in Ecuador and the Vieques bombings in Puerto Rico contradict the argument that resources are lacking.

That is why we regret to conclude that during these five years the priority of the Latin American Governments has not been social development, but rather the concentration of wealth in the region that is already the most unfair region of the world.

We demand that the creditor countries cancel the external debt and demand of our Governments the efficient, rational, democratic and transparent management of resources.

Social development is not a gift. It is a human right. We demand that Governments promote the United Nations World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in 2001 and the ratification of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. We propose the evaluation of adjustment programmes with social participation and in coordination with the follow-up of the Copenhagen agreements.

We urge the Governments to favour Latin American and Caribbean integration and defend our peoples' self-determination in economic matters. Integration and trade should be alien to discrimination and geopolitical pressure. Thus, we demand that the United States embargo against Cuba be ended. We demand the democratization of the United Nations system, beginning with the Bretton Woods institutions. We reject the fact that the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should act behind the world's back. These institutions must be restructured and must give access to civil society. You, the Governments, and we, civil society organizations, are part of the same group of people. We are ready to work with you for social development. But we also say to you, we will not leave you in peace until we achieve societies that are more democratic, fair and worthy.

Finally, I have the honour to inform you, Mr. President, that a large group of non-governmental organizations has been working on an alternative declaration, which our regional conclave has endorsed, and which we will have the honour of presenting to you for distribution to the representatives of this special session.

The President: I call on Mr. Qazi Farouk Ahmed, representative of the International Council on Social Welfare.

Mr. Ahmed (International Council on Social Welfare): I am privileged to be speaking on behalf of the International Council on Social Welfare (ICSW) in the plenary of the special session of the General Assembly on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and further initiatives.

ICSW is a global non-governmental organization which works to promote social welfare, social development and social justice throughout the world. Founded in 1928, ICSW now has member organizations from more than 80 countries. Through its outreach in major regions of the world, it has consulted its members, other non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations about progress in the implementation of the Copenhagen commitments and about their priorities for further action. This extensive participatory process was undertaken through more than 30 regional seminars, involving over 1,000 participants.

Although there has been some progress over the last five years, it is slow and inadequate. On the other hand, more has happened to disable the environment rather than enable the environment for social development. Official development assistance from northern countries has declined and it is nowhere near reaching 0.7 per cent of the gross national product, as committed to five years ago. Volatility in international financial markets, particularly in currency transactions due to abominable speculations, has ruined the economies of many developing countries, throwing more people into poverty. At the national level, there has been hardly any progress in land reform and access to adequate microfinance services is still lacking. Resources for primary and secondary education are still well below what is required. Military expenditure is more for grandiose and national ego and takes away precious resources from social development.

The underachievements are not only due to lack of resources, but also to the inadequate coordination, supervision, monitoring and technical capacity of Governments at the national level and the United Nations system at the global level. Furthermore, it is

necessary to strengthen the system of international standards that affect social development and develop new standards where appropriate. The standards developed by the United Nations and other international organizations need to be put together in a holistic frame in consonance with the Copenhagen consensus. Although synergy of action among all the actors is important, the pre-eminence of the United Nations, particularly of the Economic and Social Council, is required to maintain adherence to the world view and the development view of the Copenhagen consensus. Contrary and inconsistent development views and strategies of international financial institutions should not be allowed to subsume the consensus of the world.

In view of all this, we from ICSW propose a three-point plan. It calls for strengthening the ECOSOC system; implementing standards already agreed upon and establishing some new standards, particularly economic, governance and business standards which have social development consequences; and adopting an anti-poverty pact. This concept of reciprocal commitments could be implemented by establishing an international anti-poverty pact involving both developed and developing countries, as well as international financial institutions. The pact would involve commitment to the mobilization of resources, as well as to anti-poverty results.

The pact would involve seven key actions: increasing the provision and strengthening the application of official development assistance; improving and accelerating debt cancellation arrangements and establishing debt standstill processes; reducing excessive volatility in international financial markets through an internationally coordinated system of national taxation on currency transactions; reducing unfairness for developing countries in international trade arrangements, especially concerning agriculture and intellectual property rights; discontinuing excessive military expenditure and exports; taking a vigorous initiative by strengthening anti-corruption systems at the national and international level; enhancing equity and sustainable productivity in the ownership and usage of land and other natural resources.

The anti-poverty pact has the potential to move us beyond pious wishes into a set of concrete, time-bound measurable actions which can remove poverty within the first two decades of the twenty-first century.

The President: I give the floor to Mrs. Alida Smeehes of the European Women's Lobby.

Mrs. Smeehes (European Women's Lobby): I speak today on behalf of the Western European non-governmental organizations of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) non-governmental organization regional caucus. I would like to repeat what my colleague from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) subregion just said, that in spite of the diversity of the political, economic, social and cultural situations in Europe, one cannot ignore and separate the problems affecting people in the Eastern and in the Western parts of Europe, since they are interrelated.

The general challenges and obstacles faced in the Western European countries, in the United States and Canada and in the CIS countries are not as different as one might imagine. However, we must emphasize the following issues for the countries of Western Europe. In the West, the strong universal social protection systems built over the last 50 years are being dangerously chipped away. Unemployment rates, while going down, remain unacceptably high. Additionally, new flexible labour patterns bring about new forms of instability and disadvantages, both at work and in families. An emerging social class — the "working poor" — forces whole families into marginalization and social exclusion. The gap between the haves and the have nots is widening. Women, young people and children are those mostly affected by these negative trends. We call on Governments to recognize the dangers of violations of human rights, especially economic, social and cultural rights, within each country and towards other parts of the world.

The globalization process implies increased social responsibility on a global basis. We therefore propose the following actions. First, Governments must recognize growing poverty and inequalities within their own countries and reaffirm the role of public expenditures, which should be regarded as an investment, not as a cost to be reduced to the minimum, so long as such expenditures are based on principles of equality and sustainable development.

Secondly, the feminization of poverty should be addressed. In the context of the impact of globalization,

gender should be mainstreamed in all further initiatives.

Thirdly, migrants and immigrants, including victims of international trafficking, should have access to all basic rights enjoyed by the majority of the residents of the country where they live.

Fourthly, partnership among the various players, public, private and voluntary, should be promoted as a most efficient way of tackling poverty and social exclusion.

Fifthly, the mobilization of national and international resources for social development should be seriously considered, including reaching the agreed target for official development assistance and enhanced debt alleviation.

Sixthly, we also call on the United Nations to initiate a study to explore new forms of taxation, such as a currency transaction tax, for social development purposes and to limit the impact of financial speculation.

We trust that the next five years will see more substantial progress than has been evident in the last five in the implementation of the commitments of the social Summit as well as in further initiatives for action that will be agreed at this special session of the General Assembly. This will take collaboration by all stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, to ensure that words, spoken or written, become action.

The President: The 10th plenary meeting will now be suspended to allow time for the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole to conclude its work.